

HISTORY CALLING



Iranian President Hassan Rouhani speaks during a news conference at the Millennium Hotel in midtown Manhattan, Friday, Sept. 27, 2013, in New York. (AP Photo/John Minchillo)

**LARA JAKES
NEDRA PICKLER
Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP)** —

Breaking a third-of-a-century diplomatic freeze, President Barack Obama and new Iranian President Hassan Rouhani spoke by telephone on Friday and, in a historic shift from years of unwavering animosity, agreed to work toward resolving their deep dispute over Tehran's nuclear efforts.

Rouhani, who earlier in the day called the United States a "great" nation, reached out to arrange the 15-minute call. The last direct conversation between the leaders of the two countries was in 1979 before the Iranian Revolution toppled the pro-U.S. shah and brought Islamic militants to power. Obama said the long break "underscores the deep mistrust between our countries, but it also indicates the prospect of moving beyond that difficult history."

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SEARCH AND DESTROY



A car arrives at the headquarters of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, OPCW, in The Hague, Netherlands, Friday Sept. 27, 2013. The global chemical weapons watchdog has scheduled a meeting to approve a U.S.-Russian brokered plan to rapidly verify, secure and then destroy Syria's arsenal of poison gas and nerve agents. The 41-nation executive council of the OPCW is meeting late Friday to sign off on the plan that has been hammered out in nearly two weeks of behind-closed doors negotiations.

(AP Photo/Peter Dejong)

Syrian chemical arms inspections could begin soon

**MIKE CORDER
Associated Press
THE HAGUE, Netherlands
(AP)** — The world's chemical weapons watchdog was preparing Friday to launch a risky United Nations-backed mission into the heart of Syria's deadly civil war to verify and destroy the country's chemical arsenal in a matter of months. The risks inspectors will face were underscored when a car bomb exploded outside a mosque north of Damascus, killing at least 30 people, the latest victims of a civil war which has claimed more than 100,000 lives and driven another 7

million — around a third of the country's pre-war population — from their homes since March 2011.

Law experts, meanwhile, said discussions were underway to set up a war crimes tribunal for Syria to punish perpetrators from all sides of atrocities.

A late-night meeting at the Hague-based Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was expected to approve a plan to rid Syria's regime of its estimated 1,000-ton chemical arsenal by mid-2014, significantly accelerating a destruction timetable that often takes years

to complete.

However a decision was delayed when the meeting broke up so one nation could consult with its government over a proposed amendment by Iran, a U.N. diplomat said on condition of anonymity because the consultations were private. The meeting was scheduled to resume at 12:30 a.m. (2230 GMT), OPCW spokesman Michael Luhan said.

The United Nations Security Council also was meeting Friday night in New York to discuss Syria and vote on a resolution to destroy Syria's chemical weapons that will

underpin the OPCW plan. The draft agreed upon Thursday by Russia, China, the United States, France and Britain includes two legally binding demands — that Syria abandon its chemical stockpile and allow unfettered access to the chemical-weapons experts. If Syria fails to comply, the draft says, the Security Council would need to adopt a second resolution to impose possible military and other actions on Damascus under Chapter 7 of the U.N. charter.

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Syrian chemical arms inspections could begin soon

Continued from Front

President Barack Obama called the Security Council deal "potentially a huge victory for the international community."

The agreement shaping up for approval Friday represents a breakthrough after 2½ years of paralysis in a deeply divided Security Council.

Diplomatic efforts to find some agreement on Syria gathered momentum in the aftermath of an Aug. 21 poison gas attack that killed hundreds of civilians in a Damascus suburb and Obama's subsequent threat to use military force. The U.S. and Russia agree that Syria has roughly 1,000 metric tons of chemical weapons agents and precursors, including blister agents such as sulfur and mustard gas and nerve agents like sarin.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told the U.N. Friday that progress in Syrian chemical disarmament "should give an impetus to" moves to establish a zone "free of weapons of mass destruction and means of their delivery in the Middle East."

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told the U.N. General Assembly he hoped the Security Council resolution would be adopted "to support the OPCW in launching the verification and destruction of chemical weapons" in Syria.

He said China was prepared to help fund the disarmament mission.

A draft of the OPCW decision obtained by The Associated Press calls for the

first inspectors to be in Syria by Tuesday.

Meanwhile, a group of U.N. inspectors already in Syria investigating the alleged use of chemical weapons said Friday they are probing a total of seven suspected attacks, including in the Damascus suburb

ian Observatory for Human Rights, an activist group that monitors the civil war, said a car bomb struck as worshippers were leaving the al-Sahel mosque after Friday prayers in Rankous, 40 kilometers (25 miles) north of Damascus.

Residents quickly held fu-

mourners, activist Mohamed Saeed said.

Car bombs, shelling and airstrikes have become common in Syria's civil war, heavily damaging cities and Syria's social fabric as the conflict has taken on increasingly dark sectarian overtones that pit a primari-

crimes court in Damascus to try top-ranking Syrian politicians, soldiers or rebels when the civil war ends.

Professor Michael Scharf of Case Western Reserve University told The Associated Press that draft statutes for such a court have been quietly under development



Spokesman Michael Luhan gives a brief statement outside the headquarters of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, OPCW, in The Hague, Netherlands, Friday Sept. 27, 2013. The global chemical weapons watchdog has scheduled a meeting to approve a U.S.-Russian brokered plan to rapidly verify, secure and then destroy Syria's arsenal of poison gas and nerve agents. The 41-nation executive council of the OPCW is meeting late Friday to sign off on the plan that has been hammered out in nearly two weeks of behind-closed doors negotiations.

(AP Photo/Peter Dejong)

where hundreds were killed last month. That number was raised from three sites previously.

Attacks with conventional and makeshift weapons continued unabated.

The Britain-based Syr-

nerals for some of the bombing victims in line with Islamic tradition of quickly burying the dead.

At one funeral, several rockets fired by government troops fell nearby, wounding some of the

ly Sunni Muslim rebel movement against a regime dominated by Assad's Alawite sect.

The unrelenting violence led a group of international law experts to call for the creation of a war

for nearly two years.

Scharf said the group is going public now to push the issue of accountability for war crimes in Syria in hopes that will deter combatants from committing further atrocities. □

Pentagon wants a fresh look at stopping insider attacks

ROBERT BURNS

AP National Security Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — A pair of deadly attacks on U.S. soldiers by uniformed Afghan troops has prompted American commanders to take a fresh look at measures designed to prevent such insider attacks, the No. 2 Pentagon official said Friday.

Ashton Carter, the deputy

secretary of defense, said in an interview with a small group of reporters that the review was ordered after an attack Saturday that killed three U.S. soldiers and another on Thursday that killed one. Both happened in the eastern Afghanistan province of Paktia, although details are scarce. Insider attacks were alarmingly common in 2012 but

have happened far less often since a series of preventive measures were adopted by U.S. and coalition troops late last summer.

"We're checking to see whether people have relaxed in some way" on the preventive measures or whether the latest attacks are simply a "statistical spike," Carter said in the interview in his Pentagon

office.

During a visit to Afghanistan last week, Carter met with Gen. Joseph Dunford, the top American commander in Kabul, as well as other U.S. and Afghan officials. Carter said in the interview that the Obama administration believes that a U.S.-Afghan security agreement that has been in negotiation for months must

be completed by October. "It would be a tragedy" if it was not completed by then, he said, because the U.S. military needs time to plan for whatever post-combat mission that President Barack Obama might decide is necessary. U.S. and coalition troops are scheduled to finish their combat mission in December 2014. □

N.J. judge rules state must allow for gay marriage

KATE ZERNIKE
MARC SANTORA

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A New Jersey judge ruled Friday that the state must allow same-sex couples to marry, finding that failing to do so deprives them of rights that are guaranteed by the federal government following a ruling by the Supreme Court in June.

It is the first time a court has struck down a state ban on same-sex marriage as a direct result of the Supreme Court's ruling, and it comes as Gov. Chris Christie continues to oppose allowing gay marriage in the state. His administration may appeal.

"The ineligibility of same-sex couples for federal benefits is currently harming same-sex couples in New Jersey in a wide range of contexts," wrote the judge, Mary C. Jacobson of state Superior Court in Mercer County.

"Same-sex couples must be allowed to marry in order to obtain equal protection of the law under the New Jersey Constitution."

For instance, Jacobson wrote, civil union partners who are federal employees living in the state are not eligible for benefits stipulated in the federal pension system.

Couples in civil unions also may not enjoy the same federal tax benefits as married couples or the protections of the Family Medical Leave Act, she wrote.

The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled unanimously in 2006 that same-sex couples were entitled to all of the rights and benefits of marriage, but the court split 4-3 on the question of whether they had a fundamental right to marry under the state constitution. The majority found that no such right existed.

The state Legislature responded by passing a bill to allow civil unions, but same-sex couples sued again, in Superior Court in Mercer County, arguing that civil unions denied them many benefits. □

American, Iran leaders talk for first time since 1979

Continued from Front

"While there will surely be important obstacles to moving forward, and success is by no means guaranteed, I believe we can reach a comprehensive solution," Obama told reporters at the White House. Iran's nuclear program has been a major concern not only to the United States but to other Middle Eastern nations — especially Israel — and to the world at large.

Rouhani, at a news conference in New York, linked the U.S. and Iran as "great nations," a remarkable reversal from the anti-American rhetoric of his predecessors, and he expressed hope that at the very least the two governments could stop the escalation of tensions.

The new Iranian president has repeatedly stressed that he has "full authority" in his outreach to the U.S., a reference to the apparent backing by Iran's ultimate decision-maker, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Such support would give Rouhani a political mandate that could extend beyond the nuclear issue to possible broader efforts at ending the long estrangement between Tehran and Washington — and the West in general.

It remains unclear, however, whether obstacles will be raised by Iran's hard-line forces such the powerful Revolutionary Guard, which had warned Rouhani about moving too fast with his overtures with the West.

"Friday's telephone call — Obama at his desk in the Oval Office, Rouhani in a limousine on the way to the airport after diplomatic meetings at the United Nations — marked one of the most hopeful steps toward reconciliation in decades. The White House said an encouraging meeting between Secretary of State John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif this week was a crucial factor in the thaw.

"This is part of a pattern that has led to a real breakthrough," said Iran scholar Gary Sick at Columbia University. "And basically what's happening is that the ice that has covered the U.S.-Iran relationship for over the last 30 years is starting to break. And when ice starts to break up, it goes faster than you think.

This is breathtaking." Obama came out to the White House briefing room to announce the conversation about an hour after the call ended.

"I do believe that there is a basis for resolution,"

new leadership in Tehran."

A sign of modernization in Iran? The news broke on Twitter a couple of minutes before Obama spoke, in an account that people close to Rouhani say is written by a former campaign aide who remains in close contact with the president's inner circle.

The two men talked through interpreters, but the tweet from @HassanRouhani said they ended by signing off in each other's language. "In a phone conversation b/w #Iranian & #US Presidents just now: @HassanRouhani: 'Have a Nice Day!' @BarackObama:

Rouhani aboard his plane about to depart for Tehran "after historic phone conversation with @BarackObama."

Iran's official news agency said the two "underlined the need for a political will for expediting resolution of West's standoff with Iran over the latter's nuclear program." The White House said the United States wants to move "expeditiously" with Iranian negotiations but isn't setting a hard deadline.

Rouhani has repeatedly stressed that he has "full authority" in his outreach to the U.S., a reference to



President Barack Obama speaks with Iranian President Hasan Rouhani on the phone in the Oval Office of the White House, Sept. 27, 2013. Obama, speaking in the White House briefing room, said that he and Rouhani had talked about the country's nuclear program, and Obama called the discussion an important breakthrough.

(Pete Souza/The New York Times)

Obama said. He said an agreement could usher in a new era of mutual interest and respect between the United States and Iran, but he also said it would require Iran to take "meaningful, transparent and verifiable actions" concerning its nuclear program.

"A path to a meaningful agreement will be difficult. And at this point both sides have significant concerns that will have to be overcome," Obama said. "But I believe we've got a responsibility to pursue diplomacy and that we have a unique opportunity to make progress with the

"Thank you. Khodahafez," the tweet said, quoting Obama as using the Farsi word for good-bye.

"In phone convo, President #Rouhani and President @BarackObama expressed their mutual political #will to rapidly solve the #nuclear issue," another tweet said.

The White House said that the tweets were an accurate description of the call, and that the Americans had been following the Twitter account recently to monitor Rouhani's use of social media. A picture sent out by the account showed a broadly smiling

the apparent backing by Iran's ultimate decision-maker: Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Such support would give Rouhani a political mandate that could extend beyond the nuclear issue to possible broader efforts at ending the more than long diplomatic estrangement between Washington and Tehran. It remains unclear, however, whether obstacles will be raised by Iran's hard-line forces such as the Revolutionary Guard, which had warned Rouhani about moving too fast with his overtures with the West. □



3 ex-soldiers accused of plot to kill US DEA agent

LARRY NEUMEISTER

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Two former American soldiers — one nicknamed “Rambo” — and a German ex-soldier were charged Friday with plotting to kill a U.S. drug enforcement agent and an informant after a law enforcement sting interrupted their plans to use five ex-military snipers to protect illegal drug shipments, authorities said.

The charges were announced by prosecutors in Manhattan, where an indictment unsealed in federal court portrayed a trio of ex-soldiers eager to kill for money.

“That’s fun, actually for me that’s fun. I love this work,” one was quoted as saying in court papers. The documents described numerous conversations at meetings outside the United States that were recorded by

Drug Enforcement Administration agents building their case with help from confidential sources posing as drug traffickers.

The defendants were charged with conspiracy counts and were held for appearances in U.S. District Court, though it was not immediately clear who would represent them.

“The bone-chilling allegations in today’s indictment read like they were ripped



U.S. Attorney for the Southern District Preet Bharara announces the charges against former American soldiers and a former German soldier during a news conference on Friday, Sept. 27, 2013, in New York. Two former American soldiers — one nicknamed “Rambo” — and a German ex-soldier were charged with plotting to kill a U.S. drug enforcement agent and an informant after a law enforcement sting interrupted their plans to use five ex-military snipers to protect illegal drug shipments, authorities said.

(AP Photo/Louis Lanzano)

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from the pages of a Tom Clancy novel,” U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said in a statement. “The charges tell a tale of an international band of mercenary marksmen who enlisted their elite military training to serve as hired guns for evil ends.” The indictment described Joseph Hunter, also known as “Rambo,” as a contract killer and leader of the group of ex-snipers. Hunter recruited several ex-soldiers in late 2012 and early this year to be a security team for drug traffickers, said the indictment. According to the court papers, the DEA’s sources promised Hunter at a March meeting in an Asian country that his security team would be protecting thousands of kilos of marijuana and would be seeing “tons of cocaine and millions of dollars.” Audio and video recordings of the meeting show Hunter discussing “bonus jobs” of contract killings, saying the men he had recruited want to do as

much “bonus” work as possible, the indictment said. According to the indictment, Hunter served in the U.S. Army from 1983 to 2004 before becoming a contract killer who successfully arranged several slayings. At one meeting, Hunter was captured on tape describing how he had arranged the killings of real estate agents. The indictment said a DEA source posing as a drug trafficker in May proposed killing a DEA agent and a boat captain providing information to U.S. law enforcement authorities, saying it was necessary because there was a “leak” within the narcotics trafficking organization. In an email exchange, Hunter responded: “My guys will handle it. ... Are you talking about both the captain and agent or just the captain?” according to the indictment. Also charged in the assassination plot were Timothy Vamvakias and Dennis Gogel, a German citizen. □



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Senate Oks bill to avert shutdown; fight not over

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democrats set up a clash with House Republicans that could lead to a partial shutdown of the U.S. government next week, approving a spending bill Friday that includes funding for President Barack Obama's health care overhaul — a provision Republicans oppose.

The Senate vote — 54-44 along party lines — kicks it back to the House, where Republican leaders have already said they will not accept the pared-down Senate version of the bill.

If no agreement is reached by Tuesday, the government will be forced into a shutdown that will keep more than a third of federal employees home, disrupting key services and undermining the shaky U.S. economic recovery.

Adding to the uncertainty, House Republicans are divided on their strategy for responding to the Senate bill. Hardcore conservatives are determined to use the spending legislation as leverage to demolish the 3-year-old health care law, the most significant domestic accomplishment of the Obama administration. But many Republican leaders fear that insisting on the point will backfire and the party will be blamed for a shutdown. Earlier Friday, many Republican Senators joined Democrats in voting

to end delaying tactics by two conservative lawmakers trying to derail passage of the spending bill. The 79-19 vote marked an emphatic defeat for Sen. Ted Cruz and Mike Lee, whose tactics have been criticized as futile by many other Republicans.

Obama spoke after the vote from the White House, where he said it was up to House Republicans to follow the Senate's lead and prevent a shutdown. He said the struggle has nothing to do with budget deficits, and said if Republicans "have specific ideas on how to genuinely improve the (health care) law rather than gut it, rather than delay, it rather than repeal it, I am happy to work with them." He also said even a shutdown would not prevent the scheduled opening of so-called health care exchanges next Tuesday through which millions of Americans will be able to shop for coverage. "That's a done deal," he said.

A government closure would force national parks from California to Maine and all the Smithsonian museums in the nation's capital. Workers at the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs wouldn't be around to process visa and passport applications, complicating the travel plans of hundreds of thousands. □



Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nev., foreground, and Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., stand next to a countdown clock indicating three days to go before the federal government is due to run out of money, Friday, Sept. 27, 2013, during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, after passing a stopgap spending bill to keep the government running, but stripped of the defund "Obamacare" language, as crafted by House Republicans.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

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Immigrants in U.S. face uncertainty after floods

IVAN MORENO

Associated Press

EVANS, Colorado (AP) — Immigrants living in the U.S. illegally returned to their mobile home parks in flood-ravaged Colorado to find that there was little left to salvage — not the water-damaged cars, not the old family pictures and not the sheds carried away by the rushing waters.

The destruction, however, was only the beginning of what's been a nightmarish two weeks. They didn't have flood insurance. And because they are not citizens or legal residents — and don't have family members who are — they won't get the federal gov-

ernment's help.

"They say that faith and hope die last," said Juan Partida, 40, a dairy worker who along with his wife Mari, who is pregnant, do not qualify for federal emergency aid because they are in the country illegally. "We need to have faith and hope that we'll get help."

How quickly they can rebuild their lives, relying largely on local government and nonprofit organizations, will have long-term ramifications on the industries that depend on their labor, from meatpacking plants and farms to construction and hotels.

"They're out of their homes,



Immigrant worker Raul Hernandez, and Sonia Marquez, an organizer with the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition, survey the flood damage inside Hernandez's home, which was declared uninhabitable due to permanent damage at a trailer park in Evans, Colo. The majority of the residents in the trailer park are immigrants who didn't have flood insurance, and because some are not citizens or legal residents, they can't get government help.

(AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)




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and a lot of them have lost their vehicles in this, they're impacted. So the economy is going to be impacted," said Lyle Achziger, mayor of Evans, a city on the northern plains whose population of 19,500 is 43 percent Latino.

Achziger said officials responding to the disaster have been learning about the immigrants' importance to the region's economy. He said the city hopes to get people help by getting them to register with the city, county and other volunteer aid organizations.

"We have told them that immigration status is not our focus. And I will repeat that again, that is not our focus. Our focus is getting people out of the cold, getting a roof over their head and getting them a warm meal," he said.

The JBS meatpacking plant employs nearly 50 immigrant workers whose families were displaced. The company has paid

for hotels, delivered food, and tried to connect families with available services, company spokesman Cameron Bruett said.

Many of the mobile park residents came from Mexico, and those in the country illegally will not get help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency unless they have U.S. citizen children or a family member who is a legal resident. For those who do qualify for FEMA aid, immigrant advocates are concerned there's a lack of Spanish-language speakers to help families navigate the system.

FEMA insists it has enough Spanish-speaking workers in the field helping immigrants. Spokesman Daniel Llargues said the agency is committed to "making sure that they're getting the information they need to recover" and that Spanish speakers have been knocking on doors and stationed at disaster assistance centers. □

Jury deliberates suit against Jackson promoter AEG

LINDA DEUTSCH

AP Special Correspondent
LOS ANGELES (AP) —

After a bitterly fought five-month trial, a negligence lawsuit by Michael Jackson's mother against his concert promoter is in the hands of a jury after a final plea by a Jackson lawyer to punish the company he portrayed as a heartless, money-making machine.

In his argument Thursday, attorney Brian Panish, who represents Katherine Jackson, urged the six women and six men on the jury to find that defendant AEG Live LLC and Jackson shared responsibility for hiring Dr. Conrad Murray, the physician whose treatments killed the superstar. Earlier this week, a lawyer for AEG Live suggested the promoter was pressured by Jackson to hire Murray as his personal physician, and was deceived when Jackson and Murray hid the

fact that the singer was receiving nightly doses of the anesthetic propofol in his bedroom.

The drug is intended for use during operations at hospitals. Murray was convicted in 2011 of involuntary manslaughter after giving Jackson an overdose of propofol as a sleep aid as Jackson fought chronic insomnia. Murray is in prison. Jurors were led out of the courtroom by 10 armed sheriff's deputies assigned to guard them during deliberations. They spent two hours behind closed doors, then retired for the night and returned Friday for their first full day of talks.

Panish used his rebuttal argument Thursday to urge the jury to find that AEG hired Murray without considering whether he was fit for the job. AEG lawyers say it was Jackson who hired the doctor.

In his speech to jurors,

Panish suggested they might decide there was shared negligence in hiring Murray. "Think of a bicycle built for two," he said. "Both can cause the harm." He did not blame Jackson for seeking propofol and in-

stead cited AEG for hiring the doctor who gave it to him. "Propofol might not be the best idea," Panish said. "But if you have a competent doctor, you're not going to die."

Panish claimed that AEG

executives such as CEO Randy Phillips and co-CEO Paul Gongaware disdained Jackson and reminded jurors of an email in which an AEG attorney referred to Jackson as "the freak." □



Leo Ryan dances as other Michael Jackson supporters wait outside court Friday, Sept. 27, 2013, in Los Angeles. After a bitterly fought five-month trial, a negligence lawsuit by Michael Jackson's mother, Katherine Jackson, against his concert promoter, AEG Live LLC, is now in the hands of a jury.

(AP Photo/Nick Ut)



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Greenpeace will appeal activists' jailing in Russia

NATALIYA VASILYEVA

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Greenpeace said Friday it will appeal the Russian court rulings that sent its activists to jail for a protest at an off-shore drilling platform in the Arctic.

On Thursday, the court in the northern Russian city of Murmansk jailed 28 Greenpeace activists who protested last week near the platform owned by a Russian state energy giant, Gazprom, along with a freelance Russian photographer and a freelance British videographer.

"These detentions are like the Russian oil industry itself, a relic from an earlier era," Greenpeace International executive director Kumi Naidoo said in a statement. "Our peaceful activists are in prison tonight for shining a light on Gazprom's reck-

lessness."

Of the 30 people jailed by the court, 22 were put in custody for two months pending an investigation and the other eight were detained for three days pending a new hearing, now scheduled for Sunday. No charges have been brought against any of the activists. Russian authorities are considering whether to charge them with piracy, among other offenses.

The Russian Coast Guard disrupted an attempt by two of the activists to scale the oil platform on Sept. 18. The next day, they seized Greenpeace's ship, the Arctic Sunrise, and towed it with the crew aboard to Murmansk.

Greenpeace Russia campaign director Ivan Blokov described the arrest as "the most aggressive and hostile act against Green-



Greenpeace activists demonstrate near the Russian embassy in Paris, Friday, Sept. 27, 2013. They are demonstrating against the ruling of a Russian court that led to the jailing of the environmental group's activists for a protest, by Greenpeace ship Arctic Sunrise, near an oil platform in the Arctic. On Thursday, the court in the city of Murmansk jailed 22 members of the Greenpeace team who were protesting near the platform last week. The demonstrators are holding photos of the activists who were aboard the Arctic Sunrise.

(AP Photo/Remy de la Mauviniere)

peace since the bombing of the Rainbow Warrior ship." Greenpeace's Rainbow Warrior was bombed by French government agents in New Zealand in 1985, killing one man. □

German party ready for Merkel talks

FRANK JORDANS

Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germany's main center-left party said Friday it is prepared to hold preliminary talks with Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives to explore the possibility of a "grand coalition" after both sides failed to gain an absolute majority in the general election.

Social Democratic Party Chairman Sigmar Gabriel said a majority of delegates at a party meeting backed the step late Friday, but they would have another say before any formal negotiations with Merkel's Union bloc begin. A final coalition agreement would have to be approved by majority of the party's 470,000 members, dampening any prospect of a quick deal.

"It's Mrs. Merkel's job to create a government,"

said Gabriel, insisting that his party wouldn't compete with its one-time allies, the Greens, for the Chancellor's affection.

Merkel's bloc, made up of the Christian Democratic Union and its Bavarian sister party the Christian Social Union, won 41.5 percent of the vote in Sunday's national election. But her pro-business coalition partner failed to clear the 5 percent threshold, putting the conservatives five seats short of a parliamentary majority. The Social Democratic Party, meanwhile, received 25.7 percent, while the Greens got 8.4 percent.

The idea of a coalition with Merkel's Union bloc is controversial within both losing parties, with many of the rank-and-file fearing they will be unable to push forward their domestic agenda. □

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Scores feared trapped in collapse of Mumbai building

NEHA THIRANI BAGRI
GARDINER HARRIS
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MUMBAI, India - Scores of people were feared trapped or dead after a five-story residential building collapsed early Friday, the fifth deadly collapse this year in and around Mumbai, a city with crumbling housing infrastructure and poor building standards. At least 11 people were confirmed dead.

The authorities said it was too early to determine the exact cause of the collapse or the number of people trapped or dead inside the structure, the Babu Genu Market building. Onlookers said the building had more than 100 residents, nearly all of whom were probably home when the structure fell. The building was about 30 years old, officials said. The scene Friday was a chaotic pile of broken steel and concrete rubble, with more than two dozen fire trucks and at least 15 ambulances on the streets.

"The building collapsed suddenly at 6 a.m. this morning," said Tanaji Ghodge, a deputy police commissioner. "We don't know how many people will come out of the rubble yet. The rescue operation is going on in full force."

Hundreds of police officers, firefighters, dockyard workers and neighbors crowded around the site of the collapse Friday in the kind of chaotic scramble that is routine after such disasters in India. Police officials tried to clear the area of bystanders. Neighbors watched from balconies and terraces overlooking the spot of the collapse.

Dr. Habbu Jadav, the superintendent of a nearby hospital, said that 25 people had been brought in

with injuries as of 8 p.m. Friday and that there were 11 deaths. Family members surrounded hospital officials, asking whether their relatives were among the dead or injured. Among them was Akhilesh Shingade, a Mumbai city official pacing the hospital waiting area hoping for news of his wife, who is eight months' pregnant and had been staying in the collapsed building with her parents.

He said there were five people in the house: his wife, Namita, and her grandmother, parents and sister.

"None of them have been found as yet," he said.

Deepteesh Kadam, 16, was admitted to the hospital with a fractured left clavicle after he shimmied out of the building through a small gap. He had been sleeping in his family's third-floor apartment when the building fell.

"I got out but I could not find my brother," he said.

In April, an illegally constructed building in a Mumbai suburb collapsed and killed 74 people, the deadliest such episode in decades.

Two more episodes followed in June, killing 19 people together. In July, the Bhiwandi garment factory collapsed, killing six people. There have been other collapses in India, including a hospital in Bhopal in April.

The collapses highlight problems with India's housing stock and construction standards. Many of the structures that dot Mumbai's skyline are crumbling and date to the country's independence, when they were hurriedly built as part of the city's emergence as a commercial hub. □



Indian Fire officials rescue a girl from debris of a collapsed building in Mumbai, India, Friday, Sept. 27, 2013. The multi-story residential building collapsed in India's financial capital of Mumbai early Friday, killing at least three people and sending rescuers racing to reach dozens of people feared trapped in the rubble.

(AP Photo)



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Italy's PM to see if shaky coalition can survive

FRANCES D'EMILIO

Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italian Premier Enrico Letta warned he will quit unless his coalition receives fresh pledges of unwavering support, and will seek a confidence vote in Parliament on his government, which risks collapses from escalating tension over ex-Premier Silvio Berlusconi's tax fraud conviction, a minister said after a tense Cabinet meeting Friday night. Berlusconi's center-right People of Freedom Party partners with Letta's center-left Democratic Party in an unusual alliance of rival forces.

Letta summoned the Cabinet to determine if the media mogul's lawmakers still back the five-month-old government, which is struggling to pull Italy out of a stubborn recession. Nearly all of Berlusconi's senators have vowed to quit if a Senate committee votes next week to strip him of his seat because of the conviction, which was upheld Aug. 1 by Italy's top court. "I am unwilling to go be-

yond this step of clarification" of support, Letta told the Cabinet, according to a statement from the premier's office. "Effective government action is clearly incompatible with mass resignations of a Parliamentary group which should be supporting this very government."

"Either (the government) is re-launched, and the country and the interests of the citizens come first, or we pull the plug" on the government, Letta was quoted as saying.

Regional Affairs Minister Graziano Delrio told reporters after leaving the 2 ½ hour Cabinet meeting that Letta will put his government to a confidence vote in Parliament after laying out his policies in a speech. If Letta loses the vote, he would have to resign. If a new government cannot be formed, perhaps with other partners, early elections could be called. No date was set for the confidence vote.

Italians voted in February in parliamentary elections, whose inconclusive results

led to weeks of political haggling, before Letta's forces and Berlusconi's forces forged the tense coalition, which has failed to jump-start the economy

call early elections.

Letta told his Cabinet he would not put up with "threats and ultimatums." He said it was "unacceptable" that on Wednesday,

Berlusconi's conviction carried a four-year prison sentence, although because of his age -- he turns 77 on Sunday -- and a law that shaves three years off



Italian Premier Enrico Letta, center, leaves after meeting with Italian president Giorgio Napolitano at the Quirinale presidential palace in Rome, Friday, Sept. 27, 2013. Italian Premier Enrico Letta is sounding out Cabinet ministers to see if his five-month-old government can survive escalating tension over ex-Premier Silvio Berlusconi's tax fraud conviction.

(AP Photo/Roberto Monaldo, Lapresse)

amid near-constant bickering. Before the meeting, Letta huddled with Italy's president, who has made plain he doesn't want to

while he was in New York representing Italy at the U.N. General Assembly, the pro-Berlusconi senators vowed to quit en masse.

sentences to ease jail overcrowding, the media mogul will only have to serve a year, and he can do so under house confinement. □

Spain raises forecasts, but recovery to be slow

CIARAN GILES

Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — The worst of the recession is over for Spain, the government said Friday as it improved its forecasts for unemployment and economic growth. But the recovery is likely to be slow and hard. The government expects the jobless rate to average 25.9 percent in 2014. While that is down from a previous forecast of 26.7 percent and slightly better than the current 26.3 percent, it is still close to a record high for Spain.

The economy is forecast to grow 0.7 percent next year, up slightly from the previous estimate of 0.5 percent released in April.

Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria announced the figures alongside the government's budget for next year, which she described as "the first budget of recovery."

The country has been in

recession for most of the past four years. The collapse of its property market in 2007 led to widespread unemployment in the large construction sector and caused massive losses for banks, many of which needed a bailout.

That led to huge debt problems for the government, which responded by cutting spending and raising taxes repeatedly, eroding standards of life in one of Europe's largest and most developed economies.

The conservative government says the reforms and austerity measures it has brought in over the past two years are beginning to pay off and the recession should end this year.

Economy Minister Luis de Guindos said that while jobs would continue to be lost, more would be created by the end of the year, making for a 0.1 percent net increase in the number of people employed. For 2013, the finance ministry

revised down its unemployment forecast to 26.6 percent from 27.1 percent.

Finance Minister Cristobal Montoro said the budget would "open the door to creating employment."

But while the government has repeatedly said it does not envisage any more major spending cutbacks, the finance ministry on Thursday announced civil servants' wages would be frozen again in 2014.

On the positive side, Montoro announced minor budget spending increases for research and development, culture, housing and education grants, the first in several years.

The government also announced changes to how yearly pensions increases are set, fixing a minimum of 0.25 percent with a possibility of increasing this depending on inflation and the state of the economy. Up to now, pensions have been indexed to the yearly inflation rate. □



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Experts fear Dominican ruling could cause major crisis



A youth of Haitian descent holds a sign that reads in Spanish "I'm Dominican" during a protest demanding that President Danilo Medina stop the process to invalidate their birth certificates after authorities retained their ID cards, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic's top court on Thursday, Sept. 26, 2013 stripped citizenship from thousands of people born to migrants who came illegally, a category that overwhelmingly includes Haitians brought in to work on farms. The decision cannot be appealed, and it affects all those born since 1929.

(AP Photo/Ezequiel Abiu Lopez)

**DANICA COTO
EZEQUIEL LOPEZ
Associated Press**

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP) — Experts warned Friday that a Dominican court decision to strip citizenship from children of Haitian migrants could cause a human rights crisis, potentially leaving tens of thousands of people stateless, facing mass deportation and discrimination. Officials promised to create a path to Dominican citizenship, but gave no details about how it would work or who would be covered.

The ruling by the Constitutional Court is final and

gives the electoral commission one year to produce a list of people to be excluded from citizenship.

The decision applies to those born after 1929 — a category that overwhelmingly includes descendants of Haitians brought in to work on farms. It appears to affect even their grandchildren, said Wade McMullen, a New York-based attorney at the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights.

A U.N.-backed study released this year estimated that there are nearly 210,000 Dominican-born people of Haitian descent and roughly another 34,000 born to parents of another

nationality.

Many of those "are now effectively stateless," McMullen said. "We really don't know what's going to happen to those people ... Based on what the Dominican government is saying, these people are not Dominican citizens and will have to leave and effectively go to Haiti, where they are also not citizens. It creates an extremely complicated situation."

The majority of them don't have Haitian citizenship, have little or no ties to Haiti and likely don't speak Creole, he said. Getting Haitian citizenship can be complicated too because it is difficult to comply with requirements to prove descent from a Haitian national.

Roberto Rosario, president of the electoral commission, insisted that the government is not denying anyone the right to a nationality, saying people would be able "to legalize themselves through the national legalization plan."

However, that plan has not yet been created, despite a 2004 immigration law that called for it, and it was not clear who would be covered.

Once the plan is created and the electoral commission turns in its list, it will take no more than two years for legalization, said Immigration Director Jose Ricardo Taveras, member of a nationalist party that has long complained about the "Haitianization" of the Dominican Republic. □

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Cuba announces their athletes can sign with foreign leagues

ANNE GARCIA
PETER ORSI
Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Could a new wave of Cuban baseball players be headed for the majors in America without having to defect from the communist island? Cuba announced Friday that athletes from all sports will soon be able to

sign contracts with foreign leagues, a break with a decades-old policy that held pro sports to be anathema to socialist ideals.

It's a step toward the day when the road from Havana to Yankee Stadium might mean simply hopping on a plane rather than attempting a perilous sea crossing or sneaking out

of a hotel at midnight in a strange land. But American baseball fans shouldn't throw their Dodgers or Rockies caps in the air in celebration just yet. The Cold War-era embargo against Cuba means it may not happen anytime soon. If it does come to pass, it could increase — astronomically, in some cases —

the amount of money Cuban baseball players can earn. Athletes' wages are not made public in Cuba but are believed to be somewhere around the \$20 a month that most other state employees earn — a tiny fraction of the millions many U.S. big-leaguers make. "It's the dream of many athletes to test themselves in other leagues — the big leagues, if at some point my country would allow it," said Yasmani Tomas, who is one of Cuba's top talents, batting .345 last season with the powerhouse Havana Industriales. Under the new policy, athletes will be eligible to play abroad as long as they fulfill their commitments at home, the Communist Party newspaper Granma reported. For baseball players, that means being available for international competitions as well as Cuba's November-to-April league.

President Raul Castro's government clearly hopes the move will stem defections by athletes who are lured abroad by the possibility of lucrative contracts, a practice that saps talent from Cuba's teams.

"I think this could help stop the desertions a little bit," said Yulieski Gourriel, a talented 29-year-old third baseman who batted .314 last year for Sancti Spiritus. "I don't even want to talk about how much I've been offered, because every time we leave the country, there are these offers. I've never paid attention because I've always said I'm not interested."

A number of his countrymen, however, are interested. Cuban defectors now in the majors include Yasiel Puig, who signed a seven-year, \$42 million contract with the Dodgers and had a sensational rookie season, helping Los Angeles win its division. Aroldis Chapman, the hard-throwing reliever, is making just over \$5 million a year with the Cincinnati Reds. If the policy change comes to pass, "it's good for Cuba, for everybody, for the players — more people in the big leagues, more experience for international tournaments," said Milwaukee Brewers infielder Yuniesky Betancourt, a Cuban defector who left his homeland aboard a speedboat in 2003. □



A baseball player who plays for the Cuban baseball team Industriales, winds up to throw a ball during a training session in Havana, Cuba, Friday, Sept. 27, 2013. Cuba announced Friday that its athletes will be allowed to sign contracts to compete in foreign leagues, a shift from decades of policy that held professional sports to be anathema to socialist ideals. The measure promises to increase the amount of money baseball players and others are able to earn, and seems geared toward stemming a continuing wave of defections by athletes who are lured abroad by the possibility of lucrative contracts, sapping talent from national squads.

(AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

Top Cuban baseball players at home and in US

HAVANA (AP) — Baseball is as much a national pastime in Cuba as in the United States, and the source of much-coveted talent. Here's a look at some who are thriving in Major League Baseball, and others currently starring in the Caribbean nation's domestic series.

MLB:
— Yasiel Puig, 22, Dodgers. Batting .324 with 19 home runs this year. Helped spark Los Angeles to the NL West

title. Defected in 2012. Contract: seven years, \$42 million.

— Aroldis Chapman, 25, Reds. Fireballing reliever from Holguin, Cuba, has thrown the fastest pitch on record at 105 mph. Saved 38 games for Cincinnati this season. Defected in 2009. Contract: six years, \$30.25 million.

— Yoenis Cespedes, 27, Athletics. Outfielder hammered 26 homers and 80 RBIs this season, and

wowed fans with towering drives to the upper deck in winning the 2013 Home Run Derby. Defected in 2011. Contract: four years, \$36 million. Jose Fernandez, 21, Marlins. Posted a 12-6 record as a starter for Miami this year, with a 2.19 ERA. A popular pick in Rookie of the Year discussions. Defected in 2008 while still in high school. Contract: one year, \$490,000.

— Jose Iglesias, 23, Tigers. Havana-born shortstop hit-

ting .310 in Detroit this year, though he's known more for his smooth fielding. Defected in 2008. Contract: four years, \$14.24 million.

Cuban National Series:
— Jose Miguel Fernandez, 24, Matanzas. Second baseman led the league in hitting last season with an eye-popping .393 average.
— Frederich Cepeda, 31, Sancti Spiritus. Outfielder is a switch-hitting terror who went .357 at the plate last season.

— Alfredo Desapaigne, 24, Granma. Outfielder was tops in home runs with 36 on the year, and hit .345.

— Yasmani Tomas, 22, Industriales. Also posted a .345 batting average as an outfielder for his Havana powerhouse club.

— Ismel Jimenez, 26, Sancti Spiritus. Starting pitcher who didn't lose a game all season, ending with a 9-0 record. Cuba's reigning strike-out king after fanning 60. □



At the pool deck of the Marina Hotel.....

Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino presents another RLife Live event during the Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival!

ORANJESTAD - This year the Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino will be hosting the Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival on October 4 & 5 in the Renaissance Arena with magnificent scenarios. Artists that will be performing are: El Gran Combo de Puerto Rico, Levi Silvanie, George Benson, Giovanca and many more. Besides the packages the tourists will enjoy of the Caribbean Sea Jazz, the Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino will also be hosting an RLife Live event completely free of charge on Sunday October 6th with the band; Luci and the Soul Brokers. This event will take place around the pool deck of the Marina Hotel and starts at 8 PM. The Soul Brokers Band is specialized in rhythms like: Funk, Soul, R&B, Rock and Hip Hop with a Jazzy flavor. The weekend promises to be a swinging success!



For more information on the Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival visit: <http://www.caribbeanseajazz.com>. □

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grams, fits all conventions' criteria, and fulfils all group requirements. While here on the island, the dignitaries hailing from various cities in the USA, will be able to experience all that the resort and the island has to offer, first-hand. Pictured here, the rooftop cocktail party hosted by the General Manager and his executive staff, in honor of Discover Radisson Aruba. The sunset happy hour party featured cocktails and a champagne



toast over elegant, upscale hors d'oeuvres, and took place on the 9th floor penthouse deck, overlooking Palm Beach. □

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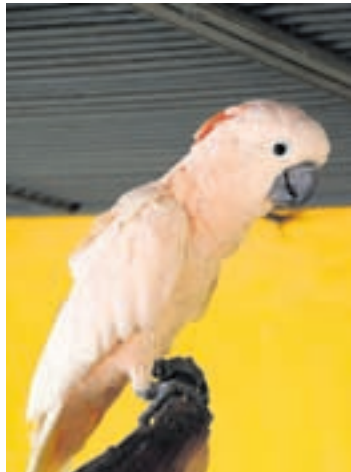
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and honor the many furry, feathered, scaly and hairy animals that we share this world with. Becoming a yearly tradition, Philip's

Animal Garden, located at Alto Vista 116, will once again be offering a great way to celebrate this special day. This weekend, on

Saturday, October 5th, and Sunday, October 6th, the animal sanctuary and rehabilitation center will host its popular Yeehah! Party. During these two days, visitors will have the chance to get up close and personal with over 50 different species of animals that call Philip's Animal Garden their home, including the Capuchin Monkey, Nigerian Dwarf Goat, Burmese Python, Alpaca, Pot-Bellied Pigs, Ocelot, Caiman, and Kan-

garoo! They'll even have the chance to feed some of the animals. Everyone is invited to come and meet the new animals, including camels and alpacas, as well as a whole bunch of newborn animals. You'll also be able to check out the first complete ocelot habitat in the Caribbean! The entrance fee for the "Yeehah" party will be only 3afl. per person, and all money raised during the event will go to the care of the animals and the maintenance of the sanctuary, which is now bigger than it has ever been. Naturally, the bar and kitchen will be well stocked, also serving a full BBQ. For the special price of only 17afl. Per person, guests can enter, receive a plate of BBQ and a refreshment, a pony ride and use of the dino jump! See you the weekend of October 5th and 6th at Philip's Animal Garden! □

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Woods voted U.S. PGA player of the year

DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida (AP) —

Tiger Woods was voted U.S. PGA Tour player of the year for the 11th time on the strength of his five big wins and return to No. 1 in the world.

It was the third time Woods won the Jack Nicklaus Award despite not winning a major. He made up for that with two World Golf Championships and The Players Championship among his five wins. No one else won more than twice this year, and Woods won the Vardon Trophy for lowest scoring average and the tour money title.

"It's been an incredible year to have won five times, two of those World Golf Championships and one Players," Woods said on a conference call on Friday. "It's been just a fantastic year all around. It's also an incredible feeling to be voted by your peers, and to have that type of respect is something that's very humbling."

The tour does not release the percentage of votes won or even who finished second.

Jordan Spieth was voted rookie of the year in a race



Tiger Woods tees off the fourth hole during the final round of play in the Tour Championship golf tournament at East Lake Golf Club, in Atlanta, Sunday, Sept. 22, 2013.

Associated Press

that likely was no contest. The 20-year-old Texan began the year with no status on any tour. He won the John Deere Classic, lost in a playoff at another event, reached the Tour Championship, was chosen for the Presidents Cup team and wound up 10th on the money list with nearly \$4 million.

He will be the youngest American — and first tour rookie — to play in the Presidents Cup next week in Ohio.

"I don't know if it's a 'pinch me' moment yet," Spieth said. "I think my mind is still really on next week."

Woods was on the ballot with British Open champion Phil Mickelson, Masters champion Adam Scott, FedEx Cup champion Henrik Stenson and Matt Kuchar. Mickelson also won the Phoenix Open and was runner-up in the U.S. Open for the sixth time. Along with his first major, Scott won The Barclays. If either of them had won the Tour Championship, three wins and a major might have won some votes over five big wins and no majors.

Continued on page 20



Petra Kvitová of the Czech Republic reacts after winning over Venus Williams of the United States during their semi-final match of the Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament in Tokyo, Friday, Sept. 27, 2013.

Associated Press

Kvitová, Kerber advance to Pan Pacific final

JIM ARMSTRONG

AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Petra Kvitová rallied to defeat Venus Williams 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (2) and advance to the Pan Pacific Open final on Friday.

Fifth-seeded Angelique Kerber of Germany defeated fourth-seeded Caroline Wozniacki 6-4, 7-6 (5) in the other semifinal.

Kerber leads their head-to-head 2-1, all of the matches last year.

The seventh-seeded Kvitová won when Williams' return was long to close the match at Ariake Coliseum in 2 hours, 24 minutes. Kvitová dominated the tie-break, jumping out to 6-0. Williams pulled two points back before Kvitová capitalized on her third match point.

"I am really happy with how I played today," Kvitová said. "It was a very close match and every game was up and down."

Kvitová held off 11 break points.

Williams was bidding for her first title since last October, when she won in Luxembourg.

"I was probably a little tired," said Williams, who endured a three-hour, three-setter on Thursday. "But I don't think it affected the match. She played two matches yesterday so no doubt was a little tired as well." □

49ers regain footing, beat Rams 35-11

R.B. FALLSTROM

AP Sports Writer

ST. LOUIS (AP) — San Francisco's Colin Kaepernick threw two touchdown passes and the 49ers defense stopped up in the absence of some stars to produce a 35-11 win over the St. Louis Rams on Thursday.

Anquan Boldin had five catches for 90 yards and a touchdown, and tailback Frank Gore had 153 yards on 20 carries and a 34-yard score for San Francisco, which squared its record at 2-2.

Navarro Bowman had two of the 49ers' five sacks with a strip leading to a fourth-quarter scoring run by Anthony Dixon.

The Rams (1-3) had an overtime win and tie against San Francisco last year, and took the early lead Thursday before falling flat. Greg Zuerlein banged in a 40-yard field

goal off the right upright to end a nine-game scoring drought in the first quarter, but the 49ers responded with 28 straight points.

The 49ers came close to a Super Bowl title in February and regained their footing against the team that gave them the most trouble last season.

Minus cornerback Nnamdi Asomugha and linebackers Patrick Willis and Aldon Smith, they quieted a raucous, hopeful crowd.

Kaepernick, who had no touchdown passes, four interceptions and completed less than half his passes over the previous two weeks, was much improved, going 15 for 23 for 167 yards.

Boldin too picked up his output after a quiet two weeks.

He had two highlight catches in the second quarter, a 42-yarder de-



San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Anquan Boldin dives into the end zone to score on 20-yard touchdown reception as St. Louis Rams cornerback Cortland Finnegan defends during the second quarter of an NFL football game Thursday, Sept. 26, 2013, in St. Louis.

Associated Press

spite being held, and a 20-yard score after barely avoiding the sideline.

Gore more than doubled his output from the first three weeks and got a lot

more work, too, after totaling just 11 carries last week. The Rams have trailed by double digits in every game, making up an 11-point deficit against Ari-

zona in the opener but not gaps of 21 and 24 points against Atlanta and Dallas, and were down by 25 in the fourth quarter against San Francisco. □

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U.S. PGA

Continued from page 18

Mickelson, with more wins (42) and majors (five) than any player except for Woods dating to the Tom Watson generation, has never been tour player of the year, No. 1 in the world ranking or won a tour money title.

The Jack Nicklaus Award began in 1990. In 24 years, Woods has won it 11 times and only two other players have won it twice — Fred Couples (1991, 1992) and Nick Price (1993, 1994). It was the fourth time in the last five years that the winner did not capture a major. Woods nearly made it a clean sweep of all the awards. Steve Stricker narrowly beat him out for the Byron Nelson Award with a 65 on the final day at East Lake in the Tour Championship. That award is for lowest scoring average, though it is not as prestigious as the Vardon Trophy from the PGA of America.



Jordan Spieth ruffles his hair as he walks off the 18th hole after completing his final round of play in the Tour Championship golf tournament at East Lake Golf Club, in Atlanta, Sunday, Sept. 22, 2013. Associated Press

The Vardon Trophy dates to 1937 and requires 60 rounds (instead of 50 for the PGA Tour's version of the award) with no incomplete rounds. It was the first time since 2009, right before his personal life unraveled, that Woods won these awards. Even though he has more of them than anyone in history, he said that it doesn't get old.

"I know how hard it is," Woods said. "I've had to work my way back from injuries on numerous occasions throughout the years. These last couple years are no exception to that. There were a lot of people saying I could never win again, and two years later I've got eight wins on our tour. I'm very proud of where I've come from, from be-

ing ranked outside the top 50 to being ranked where I am now, and to have had the success that I've had this year just makes it all the more rewarding." He said his biggest win this year was at The Players Championship, mainly because it's the one golf course he plays regularly that has given him fits. His other wins this year came

on courses where he won for at least the fourth time. "You start playing golf courses that you like and that suit your game," Woods said. "Guys generally play that schedule and give themselves the best opportunity to win tournaments and to have a nice living out on tour. For me, The Players Championship is the big event and against probably the strongest field we play all year. I haven't had a lot of success since 2001.

"To finally put myself there with the chance and the way I was hitting it to get it done on that Sunday, boy, it sure felt good."

Woods and Spieth won two different awards, though both pointed to the area of improvement — the majors. Woods has been stuck on 14 majors since 2008, though he had a chance in the final round this year at the British Open. Spieth missed the cut at the U.S. Open and U.S. PGA Championship and tied for 44th in the British Open. □

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NFL Preview

With a win, Bears could take charge of division

BARRY WILNER

AP Pro Football Writer

First place in the NFC North division is at stake on Sunday, and the Green Bay Packers will be nowhere in the vicinity.

Instead, it's the Chicago Bears, one of seven 3-0 teams in the NFL, against the Detroit Lions at Ford Field.

A victory for Chicago would give it a stranglehold on the division through one-fourth of the schedule. The Bears have been impressive under new coach Marc Trestman, showing a knack for vital plays on both sides of the ball. They have a league-high 11 takeaways, are making good decisions, and Devin Hester is averaging 38 yards per kickoff return. But they also have some injuries, with defensive end Henry Melton (knee) gone for the season and star cornerback Charles Tillman hobbled but saying he will play. Tillman normally would match up with the Lions' top threat, receiver Calvin Johnson.

"He's a big, strong, physical corner," Johnson said of Tillman. "He's smart. He's seen a lot of football,

so he understands some of the concepts probably that we do on offense, so we've got to throw different things at him to get him off balance."

Detroit is winning the close ones — the Lions have outscored the opposition by only 13 points. Their passing attack is second in the league, but just lost a key piece when receiver Nate Burleson was injured in a car accident.

The Lions got some good news: Running back Reggie Bush has recovered from the left knee injury that sidelined him in last week's win over Washington.

"He's a very valuable part of our offense and he affects the way defenses play us," coach Jim Schwartz said. "If we can get him back on the field, that will be a big plus for us."

Under Pete Carroll, the Seattle Seahawks have been dominant at home, but mediocre on the road. They began turning that around late last season, and a win in Houston on Sunday would make a big statement.

Carroll takes the NFL's stin-



Chicago Bears running back Michael Bush (29) celebrates scoring a touchdown with teammates in the first quarter of an NFL football game against the Pittsburgh Steelers in Pittsburgh, Sunday, Sept. 22, 2013.

Associated Press

giest defense, particularly against the pass, into Reliant Stadium. Houston also has a rugged defense, but the Texans got pushed around by Baltimore last week and have yet to make their own statement as a power.

The unbeaten New Eng-

land Patriots visit Atlanta, which is struggling. The Falcons need to get healthy as much as anything, and find ways to stop the pass. That, of course, is essential against quarterback Tom Brady, whose receiving corps looked far more professional in the romp over

Tampa Bay than in the first two wins.

Meanwhile, Monday's compelling matchup between the New Orleans Saints and Miami Dolphins features two teams who had losing records last season and are off to 3-0 starts this time. □

Braves pull into tie for NL's top record

The Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Jason Heyward had a career-high five hits, including a leadoff home run, and Atlanta rode a five-run first inning to a 7-1 victory over Philadelphia on Thursday night.

The win pulled the Braves even with idle St. Louis at 94-65 for the best record in the National League with three games to play. The Braves won the season

series against the Cardinals and would win the NL's No. 1 seed if the teams finish tied.

Rookie David Hale (1-0) got his first major league win in his second career start, allowing one run in six innings while striking out five. Phillies rookie Tyler Cloyd (2-7) took the loss after giving up seven runs and eight hits in one inning.

Evan Gattis had two hits and

Atlanta Braves' Jason Heyward hits a double in the fifth inning of a baseball game against the Philadelphia Phillies, Thursday, Sept. 26, 2013, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

three RBIs for the Braves.

Jimmy Rollins went 3 for 4 for the Phillies, who have lost seven of eight.

Continued on net page



Rays top Yankees in Rivera's home finale

The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Mariano Rivera said goodbye to Yankee Stadium with hugs, tears and cheers.

AL Capsules

Baseball's most acclaimed relief pitcher made an emotional exit in his final appearance in the Yankees' home pinstripes, when captain Derek Jeter and Andy Pettitte came to the mound to remove him with two outs in the ninth inning of a 4-0 loss to the Tampa Bay Rays on Thursday night. "It's time to go," Jeter appeared to tell Rivera. Tampa Bay won its seventh straight and leads the AL wild-card race.

During four minutes of thunderous chanting from the sellout crowd 48,675, an overcome Rivera sobbed as he buried his head on the shoulder of Pettitte and then hugged Jeter.

It was an extraordinary sight in a sport where a manager almost always goes to the mound to make a pitching change. Yankees manager Joe Girardi checked with the umpires to make certain Jeter, who is on the disabled list, could take part.

"I was so thankful they came out," Rivera said after the game.

Rivera, who retired four straight batters, wiped his eyes with both arms as he walked off and blew a kiss to the first row behind the Yankees dugout. He hugged a tearful Girardi in the dugout, grabbed a towel to dab the tears, and came out again and doffed his cap to the crowd. All the while, the Rays remained in their dugout applauding.

INDIANS 6, TWINS 5

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Reliever Joe Smith struck out pinch-hitter Oswaldo Arcia to end a ninth-inning rally and Cleveland won its seventh straight game, holding off Minnesota to keep pace in the AL wild-card race.

The Twins scored four runs in the ninth and had runners on first and second before Smith got the final out.

Cleveland leads Texas by



New York Yankees relief pitcher Mariano Rivera acknowledges the crowd's standing ovation after coming off the mound in the ninth inning of his final appearance in a baseball game at Yankee Stadium, Thursday, Sept. 26, 2013, in New York. The Yankees defeated the Tampa Bay Rays 4-0.

Associated Press

one game for the second wild-card spot. Each team has three games left in the regular season. Tampa Bay is on top in the chase, one game ahead of the Indians.

Yan Gomes hit a towering two-run homer and Michael Brantley added three hits and two RBIs from the leadoff spot.

Bryan Shaw (7-3) picked up the victory in relief of Zach McAllister by getting five key outs over the fifth and

sixth innings.

RANGERS 6, ANGELS 5

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Pinch-hitter Jurickson Profar homered leading off the ninth inning and Texas overcame a four-error inning to beat Los Angeles and stay in the playoff chase.

The Rangers are a game behind Cleveland for the second wild-card spot in the American League.

It was the fourth straight time the Rangers have beaten the Angels on a

walk-off homer at home. They did it each time in a three-game sweep in late July.

Joe Nathan (6-2) got the win after striking out two with a runner at third and one out in the top of the ninth.

Profar's sixth homer came off Michael Kohn (1-4).

ROYALS 3, WHITE SOX 2

CHICAGO (AP) — Jeremy Guthrie pitched seven strong innings, and David Lough hit a two-run homer

to lead Kansas City to victory over Chicago.

One day after being eliminated from the postseason, the Royals earned their 84th win, their most since 1993.

The Royals' 6-0 loss to Seattle on Wednesday, combined with victories from all three teams ahead of them in the AL wild-card standings, officially eliminated them from playoff contention.

Guthrie (15-12) became the Royals' third 15-game winner since 1997. He gave up two runs and four hits, striking out four and allowing one walk. Guthrie already surpassed his career best win total when he won his 12th on Aug. 5 against the Twins.

ORIOLES 3, BLUE JAYS 2

BALTIMORE (AP) — Miguel Gonzalez pitched seven innings of two-hit ball, Matt Wieters homered and drove in two runs, and Baltimore beat Toronto.

Nick Markakis had two hits and an RBI for the Orioles, who won the season series 10-9. Baltimore is 13-5 at Camden Yards against the Blue Jays since the start of the 2012 season.

Gonzalez (11-8) allowed one unearned run, struck out five and walked one.

□

NL Capsules

Continued on net page

PADRES 3, DIAMONDBACKS 2, 11 innings

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Alexi Amarista hit an RBI single in the 11th inning for San Diego. Tommy Medica led off the 11th with a swinging bunt down the third-base line for an infield single. Jesus Guzman batted for reliever Nick Vincent (6-3) and hit a ground-rule double that center fielder A.J. Pollock misplayed. Josh Collmenter (5-5) intentionally walked Nick Hundley to load the bases, and Amarista slapped a single through a drawn-in infield. Arizona's Trevor Cahill, who had won five straight starts, worked 6 2-3 innings, allowing two runs and five hits.

Padres starter Robbie Erlin allowed two runs, three hits and a walk, while striking out seven in seven innings. The Diamondbacks tied the score in the fourth inning when Martin Prado hit his 14th homer of season. Paul Goldschmidt led off the inning with a single. After the homer, Padres pitchers retired 24 straight batters.

BREWERS 4, METS 2

NEW YORK (AP) — Scooter Gennett capped a four-run second inning with a two-run single and Milwaukee overcame some wild pitching that included the beaming of David Wright. Wright was hit in the helmet by a pitch from Johnny Hellweg with two outs in the third inning. The All-Star third baseman went down to his hands and knees but

he was able to walk off the field unassisted. The Mets said he was removed as a precaution. Hellweg hit Lucas Duda with the next pitch — in the back of the leg — and then loaded the bases with a four-pitch walk. But the Mets could not take advantage. Hellweg failed to make it to the fifth despite leading 4-1. He gave up a run and two hits, walked four, hit two batters and threw a wild pitch. Alfredo Figaro (3-3) took over. Dillon Gee (12-11) entered with a 2.57 ERA in his last 21 starts, and, except for an unfortunate third inning, he shut down the short-handed Brewers for six innings. Jim Henderson gave up a homer, affirmed by video review, to pinch-hitter Josh Satin before striking out three for his

27th save.

GIANTS 3, DODGERS 2

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Angel Pagan hit a tie-breaking home run leading off the eighth inning to give San Francisco a win in what might have been Tim Lincecum's final outing with the club. Pagan's fifth home run in an injury-shortened season was surrendered by losing pitcher Paco Rodriguez (3-3). Lincecum struck out Yasiel Puig three times among his six Ks but missed a win against the NL West champion Dodgers. Santiago Casilla (7-2) earned the victory with a 1-2-3 eighth, while Sergio Romo pitched the ninth for his 38th save. Lincecum is wrapping up a \$40.5 million, two-year contract that paid him \$22 million this season. □

Faulty app directions to Alaska runway disabled

MARK THIESSEN

Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)

— Apple has disabled driving directions to the Fairbanks International Airport after a glitch in its maps app guided drivers to the edge of a runway instead of a terminal, airport spokeswoman Angie Spear said Friday. Two times, drivers continued on and cut across an active runway to reach the terminal.

"I wouldn't describe it necessarily as a fix, they just deactivated the directions," Spear said.

Spear said now, when someone puts in the airport as their final destination, "a message pops up and

says, 'Directions not available, direction cannot be found between these locations,'" she said.

Cupertino, California-based Apple didn't immediately return a message to The Associated Press on Friday. Previous directions on newer iPhones and iPads guided drivers to the edge of the tarmac instead of the correct route to the terminal. In incidents Sept. 6 and Sept. 20, drivers went through a gate, past warning lights and signs, and then across an active runway, to reach the terminal. There were no injuries since both incidents happened early in the morning, between flights.



This Sept. 20, 2013 image provided by the Fairbanks International Airport shows the barricaded entrance to a taxiway, at Float Pond Road blocking access to Taxiway B in Fairbanks, Alaska. Associated Press

The first mishap involved an out-of-state visitor trying to return a rental car before a flight, and the second was an Alaska resident, not from Fairbanks, trying to get to the airport.

The airport has since barricaded that entrance to the taxiway. A sign posted there gives a phone number for people to call to get the correct directions to the airport.

After the first incident, airport authorities immediately attempted to contact Apple. The airport is a state facility, and the Alaska attorney general's office also reached out to Apple Inc.'s legal department to get the map fixed. □

7 cars get top rating in high-tech safety test

The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP)

— Seven midsize vehicles earned the top rating in a new insurance industry test of high-tech safety features designed to prevent front-end collisions.

The Cadillac ATS and SRX, Subaru Legacy and Outback, Mercedes C-Class and Volvo S60 and XC60 won "superior" ratings in tests by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

The institute tested 74 midsize cars and SUVs from the model years 2013 and 2014. Those equipped with front collision-warning and automatic braking systems gen-

erally scored better. The systems can either warn the driver or automatically stop the car if they sense a potential collision.

The institute IIHS, a nonprofit research group funded by insurance companies, has pushed federal regulators and automakers to require or offer as an option new safety systems such as antilock brakes. The group also is pushing automakers to bolster front-end crash resistance. Automakers have been offering the frontal-crash systems on more and more models as the price of the technology falls. The systems use



In this Sunday, Jan. 8, 2012, file photo, the 2013 Cadillac ATS is unveiled prior to the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. Associated Press

radar, cameras, ultrasonic sensors and computers to spot objects in front of cars and determine if a collision is possible. A driver may be warned to take action, or the system may apply the brakes itself.

The IIHS said its data institute has determined that the devices help drivers avoid frontal crashes, but even so, auto insurance companies generally aren't offering discounts for people who buy them. Insurance companies say that as the systems become more popular in certain models, insurance claims will decline. □

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Stock Markets slide on government shutdown worries

JOSHUA FREED
AP Business Writer

The budget fight may be happening in Washington, but it's investors on Wall Street who keep getting hurt.

U.S. stocks on Friday fell for the sixth day out of the last seven and ended the week with a decline. Investors focused on the risk that the government could shut down on Tuesday unless Congress agrees to a new spending bill. And even if that hurdle is cleared, the dispute is poised to continue into the middle of October as legislators debate raising the nation's borrowing limit.

There were a lot of moving parts for investors to keep track of on Friday. The Senate approved a spending bill that is already considered dead in the House of Representatives, where Republicans want changes to President Barack Obama's health care law. Obama spoke on live television during the closing minutes of trading. And investors braced for the possibility that when markets reopen on Monday, none of this

will have been resolved, even though the House will be in session over the weekend.

So how should an investor get ready for next week?

more information.

Stocks moved little as Obama spoke during the final minutes of trading. He reiterated a previous vow not to negotiate with Con-

gress under the threat of a shutdown. composite was down 5.83 points, or 0.15 percent, at 3,781.59.

Still, the indexes are off only about 1 percent for the week, and the S&P 500 is

month. The increases suggest anemic growth that is not strong enough to accelerate the economic recovery.

A survey showed that consumer confidence declined this month as Americans worried about the possible government shutdown and their own finances. The survey found that half of households expect no pay increase in the coming year.

The Federal Reserve's view last week that the economy is still weak is scaring people, said Frank Fantozzi, CEO of Planned Financial Services.

"If you keep saying things are bad, even if things are good, people are going to believe they're bad, and they're going to act accordingly," he said.

Eight out of 10 industry groups in the S&P 500 index fell. Health care and consumer discretionary stocks had small gains.

Among big stock movers: — J.C. Penney Co. shares slid \$1.37, or 13 percent, to \$9.05 after the struggling retailer said it would raise about \$811 million through



Trader Robert McQuade works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Worries about the U.S. economy and a looming budget battle in Washington kept global stock markets in check Friday Sept. 27, 2013.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

"I don't know what's going to happen 15 minutes from now," said Stephen Carl, head of equity trading at The Williams Capital Group. He noted that volume on Friday was low, suggesting that some investors were waiting for

gress under the threat of a shutdown.

The Dow Jones industrial average fell 70.06 points, or 0.5 percent, to close at 15,258.24. The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 6.92 points, or 0.4 percent, to 1,691.75. The Nasdaq

just 2 percent below its record high set Sept. 18.

Investors are also dealing with mixed economic signals.

On Friday, a government report showed that incomes and consumer spending grew slightly last

Empire State Building owner going public next week

JOSEPH PISANI
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Starting next week, investors could own a piece of the Empire State Building.

Or, if iconic New York skyscrapers aren't their thing, they could bite into Potbelly, a sandwich chain with more than 280 shops.

Next week, these and two more companies with familiar names — the owner of budget-friendly clothing store chain Burlington Coat Factory and Re/Max, one of the country's largest real estate agencies — are expected to sell shares in initial public offerings.

A surging stock market is drawing investors to IPOs. This past week, 12 companies went public. That's the most in one week since November 2007, said data provider Dealogic. And there have been 151 IPOs

in the U.S. this year, up 47 percent from a year ago, said IPO research firm Renaissance Capital.

A more active IPO market signals confidence in the economy, because buying into IPOs is considered a riskier investment than investing in established companies. Companies that raise money in an IPO can also hire more people and make investments with the cash, helping support economic growth. And when IPOs gain in their first day of trading, that bodes well for other companies that may go public soon, such as automaker Chrysler and social media company Twitter.

Investors are closely watching next week's lineup. "Brand recognition will always foster additional attraction," says Scott Sweet, a senior managing partner at IPO Boutique, which

rates IPOs and invests in them. But worries about a looming government shutdown could hurt demand for upcoming offerings, warns David Menlow, president of IPO analysis firm IPOfinancial.com.

Empire State Realty Trust, which owns the Depression-era building, has had a long road to its public debut. The New York company first filed for an IPO in early 2012, but was set back by shareholder lawsuits. A judge cleared the way for an IPO this spring. Investors may buy the stock just to say they own a piece of the historic building, Sweet said. Millions of tourists each year ascend the 102-story Art Deco skyscraper's heights each year to view the city from its observation deck.

And investors may clamor for shares of Potbelly after

the successful IPO of restaurant chain Noodles & Co. It went public at \$18 in June and closed Friday at \$44.32.

Here are some of the companies expected to go public next week:

— Burlington Stores Inc., which runs about 500 stores in the U.S., expects to offer 13.3 million shares priced between \$14 and \$16 each, which would raise up to \$213 million. It will trade under the ticker symbol "BURL." Besides the Burlington Coat Factory, the Burlington, New Jersey-based company also owns the Cohoes and MJM Designer Shoes stores.

— Empire State Realty Trust Inc., the real estate investment trust behind the Empire State Building, also manages other office buildings in the New York City area. It expects

to offer 71.5 million shares priced between \$13 and \$15 each, with the ticker symbol "ESB." It could raise up to \$1 billion.

— Potbelly Corp., the Chicago-based toasted sandwich chain, expects to offer 7.5 million shares between \$9 and \$11 each and raise up to \$83 million. Its ticker symbol will be "PBPB."

— Re/Max Holdings Inc., a real estate broker based in Denver, expects to offer 10 million shares, at up to \$21 each, and raise up to \$210 million.

They would trade under the symbol "RMAX."

Also on deck for an IPO next week are a methanol producer, OCI Partners LP, seeking to raise as much as \$368 million, and a mortgage investment firm, Cherry Hill Mortgage Investment Corp., which hopes to raise about \$130 million. □

Stocks don't melt down when government does

KEN SWEET
STEVE ROTHWELL
AP Markets Writers
NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. government shuts down. The economy unravels. Stocks plunge.

That may be Wall Street's worst fear, but history shows it's mostly overblown. There have been 17 government shutdowns since 1976, ranging in length from one to 21 days. None have caused a market meltdown.

The average decline in the Standard & Poor's 500 index during a shutdown lasting 10 days or more is about 2.5 percent. For shutdowns lasting five days or fewer, the average decline is 1.4 percent. "If they shut the government down for two days, the world's not going to stop revolving," says Ron Florance, deputy chief investment officer for Wells Fargo Private Bank.

Shutdowns may even offer a buying opportunity. Investors should consider the improving outlook for the global economy instead of worrying about Washington.

This isn't August 2011, when the government hit the debt ceiling and the Dow Jones industrial average endured three weeks of triple-digit swings. Europe's economies are no longer in crisis and the U.S. recovery is farther along.

In fact, stocks rose 6.5 percent in the first three months of 2013 heading into the most recent government "crisis," the start of the automatic federal budget cuts, also referred to as the sequester.

Still, investors this week have been warily eyeing Washington's budget negotiations. If a budget fails to pass, a government shutdown could start as soon as Tuesday. The stock market has fallen six of the past seven trading days. While the 2 percent decline over that stretch is modest, it shows that investors have been leery of buying stocks ahead of two big financial deadlines for U.S. government.

Congress needs to pass a funding bill to keep the government operating after Oct. 1, when the new fiscal year starts. There is also the nation's debt ceiling, which

needs to be raised before Oct. 17.

Investors worry that a potential shutdown or default could damage consumer confidence and the U.S. economy.

President Bill Clinton and the Republican House leader Newt Gingrich failed to agree on a plan to reduce the nation's budget deficit as well as cuts to Medicare premiums. As a result, the government shut twice over three months. First, it closed for five days between Nov. 13, 1995 and Nov. 19, 1995. Then a second shutdown lasted 21 days, from Dec. 15, 1995 to Jan. 6, 1996.

The S&P 500 rose 4 percent between Nov. 13 and Jan. 6, suggesting that investors were focused elsewhere. The stock market had just started its five-year, technology-fueled bull run, during which the S&P 500 more than doubled.

Even if the government shuts again, investors should take a long view because Europe and the U.S. are more stable than two years ago, says Dan Veru, chief investment officer of Palisade Capital Management.

"If things get really tricky, maybe there will be a three to five percent pullback," in stocks, Veru says.

Is it worth rearranging your stock investments? No.

Even with this week's slight pullback, the S&P 500 is still up 18 percent this year and just off an all-time high of 1,725.52 set Sept. 18.

"By the end of the year, when all of this blows by, stocks will be higher than they currently are," Veru says.

SHUTDOWNS OF MORE THAN 10 DAYS:

— 1976 Shutdown: From Sept. 30 to Oct. 11 under President Ford. S&P 500 goes from 105.24 to 101.64.

— 1977 Shutdown: From Sept. 30 to Oct. 13 under Carter. S&P 500 starts at 96.53 and ends at 93.46.

— 1978 Shutdown: From Sept. 30 to Oct. 18 under Carter. S&P starts at 102.54 and ends at 100.49.

— 1979 Shutdown: From Sept. 30 to Oct. 12 under Carter. S&P goes from 108.56 to 104.49.

— 1995-1996 Shutdown: From Dec. 15 to Jan. 6. S&P goes from 616.92 to 616.71. □

Yahoo, Softbank back Alibaba in HK IPO battle

KELVIN CHAN
AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba's biggest shareholders, Yahoo and Japan's Softbank Corp., on Friday backed the company's unusual management structure that Hong Kong's stock exchange was unwilling to accommodate, forcing it to look to the U.S. for a potentially mammoth IPO.

The show of support came a day after a senior Alibaba Group executive sharply criticized the southern Chinese city's stock exchange for being too in-

blog, Vice Chairman Joe Tsai said "Hong Kong must consider what is needed in order to adapt to future trends and changes."

Tsai said the company had ended its discussions for a potential listing. It's the first public acknowledgment that it has dropped its plans for an IPO in Hong Kong, which Tsai said was the company's "first choice" because most of its business is in China.

Alibaba's two biggest shareholders, Yahoo and Japan's Softbank, issued statements backing Alibaba.

"In a fast-moving technol-

change to grant it an exception from listing rules to allow it to maintain a "partnership" structure in which top executives, who own 10 percent of the company, retain control of the board.

Chairman Jack Ma has described the partnership system, which currently includes 28 people, as essential to preserving the company's innovative culture. Ma, a former English teacher, founded Alibaba in 1999 as a platform linking Chinese suppliers with retailers abroad. It has expanded in consumer e-commerce with its Taobao



A group of men walk past the corporate logo at the headquarters compound of Alibaba Group in Hangzhou in eastern China's Zhejiang province. Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba's biggest shareholders, Yahoo and Japan's Softbank Corp., on Friday, Sept. 27, 2013, backed the company's unusual management structure that Hong Kong's stock exchange was unwilling to accommodate, forcing it to look to the U.S. for a potentially mammoth IPO.

(AP Photo/File)

flexible in discussions about a share sale that had been expected to raise up to \$15 billion.

The company broke off talks for a Hong Kong initial public offering because the stock market wasn't willing to make an exception to its listing rules. Instead, it's looking to New York for an initial public offering that analysts estimate could value the company at more than \$100 billion.

That would dwarf the tech world's other hotly anticipated share offering by Twitter, which is estimated to have a market value of \$10 billion.

In a column posted late Thursday on Alibaba's

ogy market, it's critical that a company's leadership can continue to preserve its culture and set its strategic course for the future," said Jacqueline Reses, chief development officer at Yahoo, which owns a 23 percent stake. She added that the U.S. Internet company believes Alibaba's system reflects "the desire to govern the company for long-term success while also balancing the rights of shareholders."

Masayoshi Son, founder of Softbank Corp., which owns 35 percent, said he was "supportive" of the company's structure.

Hangzhou, China-based Alibaba failed to persuade the Hong Kong stock ex-

and Tmall platforms, which are among the world's busiest online outlets.

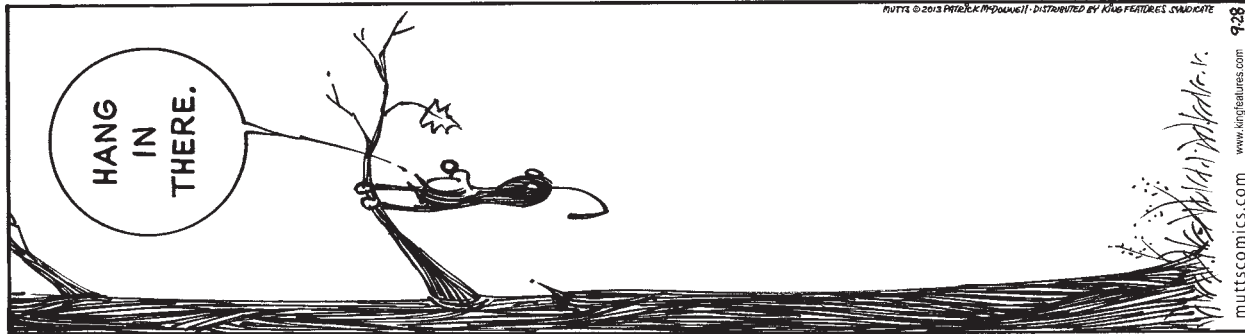
China has the world's biggest population of Internet users, and while it trails the U.S. and Japan in total e-commerce spending, the Boston Consulting Group forecasts it will rise to No. 1 by 2015.

Alibaba's proposal failed because it was at odds with the Hong Kong exchange's principle of treating all shareholders equally.

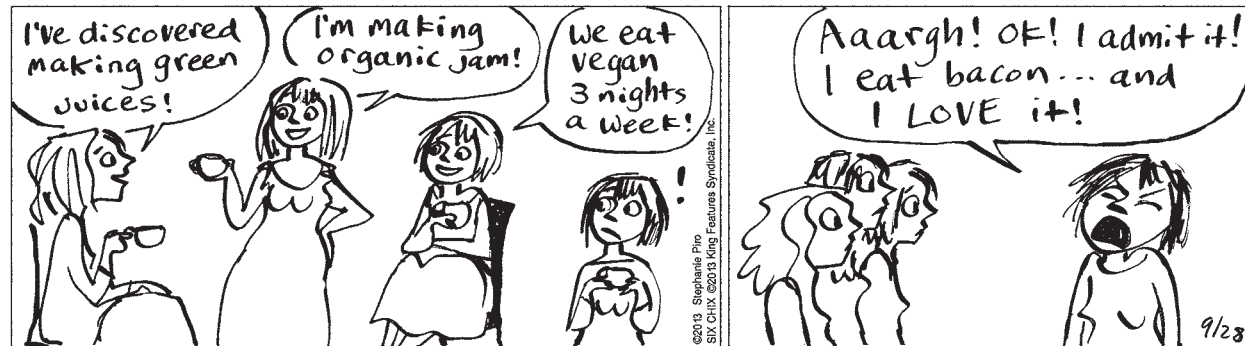
Tsai challenged the exchange over its rigidity.

"The question Hong Kong must address is whether it is ready to look forward as the rest of the world passes it by," he said. □

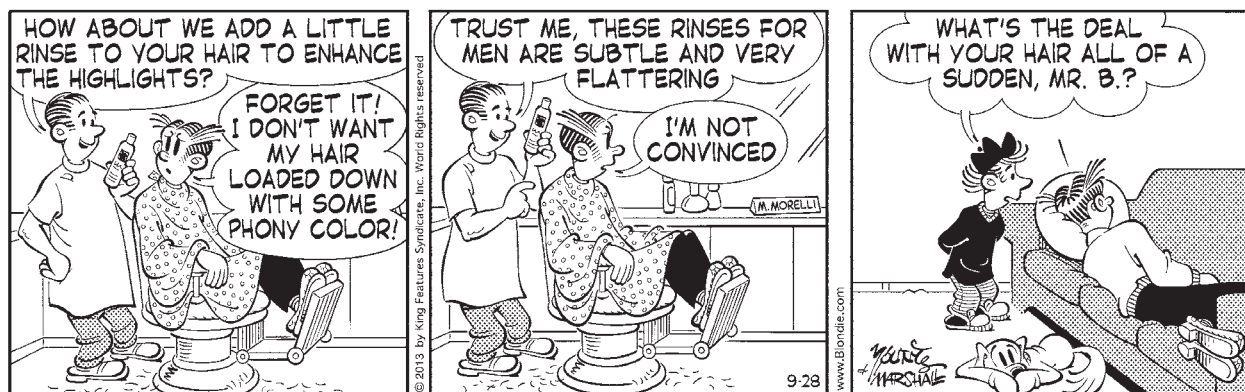
Mutts



6 Chix



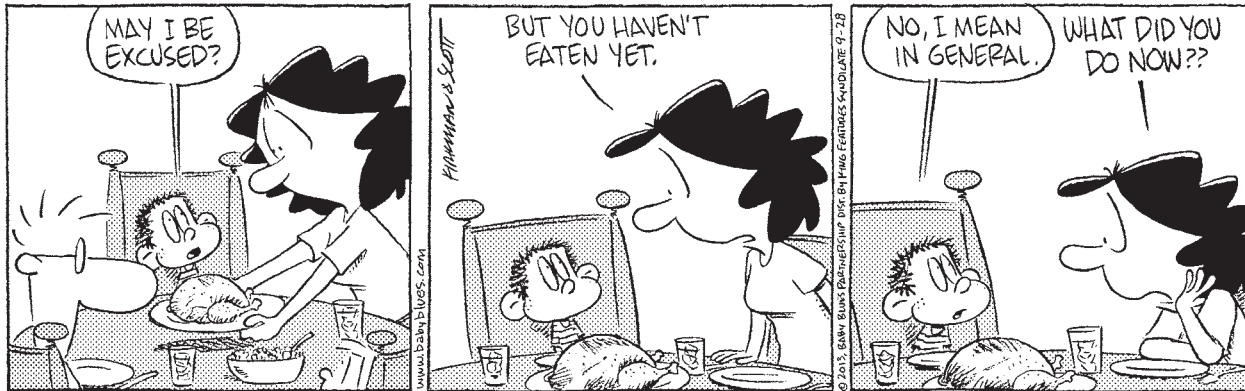
Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

8							1	
	7			2		8		9
					8		6	
			4	3		9		
	6						7	
		4		7	1			
	5		9					
7		6		5			2	
	8							1

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

9/28

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

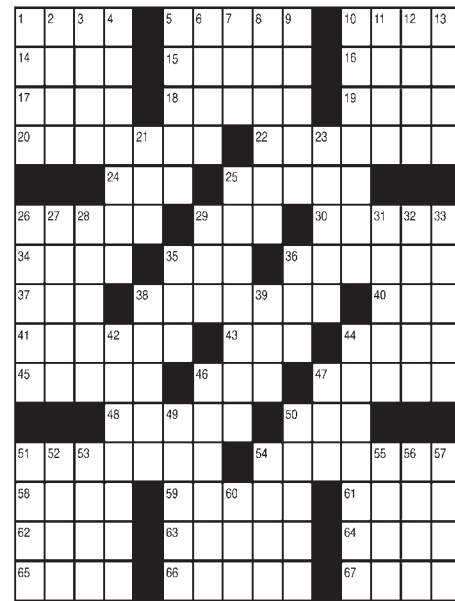
9	2	3	5	1	6	8	7	4
1	8	5	7	4	9	3	6	2
7	4	6	3	8	2	1	9	5
2	9	7	1	5	4	6	8	3
5	1	8	6	9	3	2	4	7
6	3	4	8	2	7	9	5	1
8	7	2	4	6	1	5	3	9
3	6	9	2	7	5	4	1	8
4	5	1	9	3	8	7	2	6

ACROSS

- Sentry's cry
- Home __; mortgages
- "I Am...I __", Neil Diamond hit
- Neighbor of Arizona
- Local expression
- Doing nothing
- Muscle quality
- Europe's longest river
- Create
- Orator
- Language rules
- JFK's youngest brother
- Book spine info
- Monastery
- Fellow
- Stretch of land
- Sweetheart
- Fast plane
- Learn well
- Everybody
- Wild feline
- Greek "I"
- Man's title
- Permit
- Feel the loss of
- J.C. Penney rival
- Opal or garnet
- Looks toward
- One another; each __
- Deface
- Cowboy hatter
- Get by tricky
- Harbor town
- Meat shunner
- Abel's brother
- On __; jittery
- Stay away from
- Elderly
- Entrance
- Pointing beam
- Without

DOWN

- Shacks
- Sitting on
- Path
- Movie house
- __ it up; had a ball
- Reason to take a shower
- Feel sick
- Head, slangily
- Hurt; sting
- Stews just below the boiling point
- Actor Sandler
- Actress Chase
- Buck or doe
- Door opener
- Church table
- Fink
- Pres. John Quincy __
- Misrepresent
- Light wood used for rafts
- Chess pieces
- Upper room
- Do no more
- Hernia support
- Jolt
- Encountered
- Nuisances
- Skirt's edge
- Horse used in harness racing



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

9/28/13

Friday's Puzzle Solved

CAR	OFTEN	SNUB
OMIT	DRIVE	HOPE
POLE	DALES	ROOT
SENTIMENT	INNS	
	PATE	LIE
HOMILY	THICKSET	
ALONE	PHONY	MAR
BIDS	PRONG	RAGE
IVE	AROSE	AISLE
TELEVISION	PUSHES	
	GEM	LANK
SOSO	ATTENTION	
THAI	TAUNT	EVIL
OILS	ERNIE	RENO
POET	SPEND	NET

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9/28/13

- Gourds used as instruments
- Large city in Switzerland
- Enthusiastic supporter
- Tiny unkempt home
- Ore seeker
- Drove too fast
- Commotion
- Therefore
- Lose color
- Lady __
- Claim against property
- Finales
- Car fuel

Diving into the past, Earth, Wind And Fire land in the present

BEN RATLIFF

© 2013 New York Times

NEW YORK - At first, an Earth, Wind & Fire concert is all about Verdine White. If you want to go in this direction, you can go a long way. American music used to be about bands; bands are powered by rhythm, clarified by precision and enlivened by extravagance, the sound of

him. He jackknifed his knee on downbeats (now 62, he wasn't executing his usual high kicks); he blew kisses in the middle of a bass solo, without stopping.

It was the second of a two-night stand on a tour partly promoting the band's first record in eight years, "Now, Then & Forever" (Sony Legacy), which is an attempt to reconnect with

ity by degrees, with a trap-door key change, an upward modulation, stacked cycles of riffs and rhythms, and divine repetition. It arrived in one of the concert's ballad sections, toward the middle of the show, a defined section of a carefully paced concert. This has never been a gospel group - only "Devotion," from 1974, came close, with one



the strong and the strange. White, Earth Wind & Fire's bassist and one of its three longtime touring members, is all of that: discipline and impatience, generative past and impulsive, wasteful present. He's in the class of bass players who will not be denied, who play as if they wanted to wrestle down the music and bite it. Tall, long-maned and in a jumpsuit, White dominated quickly in Wednesday's show at New York's Beacon Theater. His bass lines shoved the songs forward, in funk or ballads or dense and whirling passages near jazz-fusion, landing hard around the first beat of the bar and threading counter-melody throughout, often changing from single notes to chords in the harmony-rich bridge sections. The rest of the music, including the immaculate horn arrangements, the lead and rhythm guitars, the keyboards, the four vocal lines - everything, really - seemed to clear space for

its old sound, and better than you'd think. But the show naturally leaned hard on the distillations of that sound, the band's hits from the 1970s and early '80s. The set ran less than two hours and got down to business: three new tracks and most of the group's Billboard Top 10 singles - or to put it another way, just about every song from "The Best of Earth, Wind & Fire, Vol. 1," which has sold more than 5 million copies in this country over the last 35 years. Some street hawkers, in a definition of futility, were trying to sell home-burned compilation CDs to the over-40 crowd outside. You like the band, you own the hits; it's why you bought the ticket. If the nature of a band's work is that it must play the same hits in nearly every concert for 35 years, it would be lucky to have songs like "After the Love Is Gone," slow and highly sentimental but kind of cosmic, releasing its complex-

mention of the Lord and a projected stage backdrop of stained-glass windows - but the crowd rose and sat according to mood and tempo and message, as if by religious ritual.

And it was in the ballad sections, especially, that you might have thought about the calm inside the songs' complexity, and might have noticed that it starts with singer Philip Bailey, also an original member. (The singer and percussionist Ralph Johnson is the third.) Not that he can't show off; he did, in a solo displaying an intact upper register. It's White's way to jostle the music, leaving the marks of the now on it, but Bailey is different: His falsetto glided in and out of the generalized, unselfish songs, establishing a smooth effect while acknowledging that this wasn't his only chance. The band would be there to deal with them again on the next gig, and the next, and the next. □



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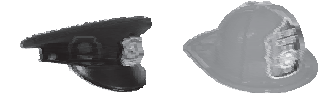
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Climate panel forecast: Higher seas, temperatures



Media representatives follow the U.N. IPCC climate report presentation, in Stockholm, Friday Sept. 27, 2013.

Associated Press

KARL RITTER
SETH BORENSTEIN
Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Top scientists have a better idea of how global warming will shape the 21st century: In a new report, they predict sea levels will be much higher than previously thought and pinpoint how dangerously hot it's likely to get.

In its most strongly worded report yet, an international climate panel said it was more confident than ever that global warming is a man-made problem and likely to get worse.

The report was welcomed by the Obama administration and environmental advocates who said it made a strong and urgent case for government action, while skeptics scoffed at it. "There is something in this report to worry everyone," said Chris Field, a Carnegie Institution scientist who is a leader of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change but wasn't involved in the report released Friday.

Without any substantial changes, he said the world is now on track for summers at the end of the century that are hotter than current records, sea levels that are much higher, deluges that are stronger and more severe droughts.

The Nobel Prize-winning panel's report called the warming of the planet since 1950 "unequivocal" and "unprecedented" and blamed increases in heat-trapping greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide from the burning of coal, oil and gas.

The United Nations created the panel of climate researchers in 1990 to tell world leaders what science is saying about global warming and how bad it will get. This is the group's fifth major state-of-the-science report, approved by nearly 200 nations at the end of a weeklong meeting in Stockholm.

In its last massive report in 2007, the panel said it was "very likely" — or 90 percent certain — that global warming was due to human activity, particularly carbon dioxide from things like coal-burning power plants and car exhaust. The new report moves that to 95 percent or "extremely likely."

The panel also fine-tuned its predictions for temperature changes and sea levels by the end of this century. Their worst case scenario previously put sea levels increase at just shy of 2 feet (59 centimeters) by 2100; now they put it at slightly more than 3 feet (1 meter). They cite better un-

derstanding of how much glaciers and ice sheets are melting and how water expands as it warms.

Unless the world drastically cuts emissions — an event scientists called highly unlikely to happen — the panel said Earth will warm by at least 2 more degrees Fahrenheit (1.1 degrees Celsius) this century in all but one of the four scenarios they outline.

That 2-degree threshold is "where the risks start piling up," including food crises in developing countries, people forced to move from coastal cities because of rising seas and more extinctions, said Princeton University climate scientist Michael Oppenheimer, a co-author of an upcoming IPCC report on impacts of climate change. "This is a point where any sensible person would look and say the risks are just getting too high."

One of those IPCC emission scenarios — the one that scientists say is closest to what is now happening and has no projected reduction in pollution — has Earth hitting the 2 degree mark by mid-century.

In that scenario, it's likely that the Arctic will have summers that are essentially ice free by mid-century and spring snow in North America would shrink by

one quarter.

"If this isn't an alarm bell, then I don't know what one is."

If ever there were an issue that demanded greater cooperation, partnership, and committed diplomacy, this is it," said U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry in a statement.

One of the most conten-

tious issues was how to deal in the report with what appears to be a slowdown in warming based on temperature data for the past 15 years. Climate skeptics say this "hiatus" casts doubt on the scientific consensus on climate change, even though the past decade was the warmest on record. □



Rajendra Pachauri, the head of the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), during the presentation of the U.N. IPCC climate report, in Stockholm, Friday Sept. 27, 2013.

Associated Press

Key findings of IPCC report on climate change

The Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, an international body established by the U.N. in 1988, presented a summary of its latest assessment on climate change on Friday. Here are the key findings:

— Global warming is "unequivocal," and since the 1950's it's "extremely likely" that human activities have been the dominant cause of the temperature rise.

— Concentrations of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have increased to levels that are unprecedented in at least 800,000 years. The burning of fossil fuels is the main reason behind a 40 percent increase in CO₂ concentrations since the industrial revolution.

— Global temperatures are likely to rise by 0.3 to 4.8 degrees C, or 0.5-8.6 F, by the end of the century depending on how much governments control carbon emissions.

— Most aspects of climate change will continue for many centuries even if CO₂ emissions are stopped.

— Sea levels are expected to rise a further 10-32 inches (26-82 centimeters) by the end of the century.

— The Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets have been losing mass over the past two decades. Glaciers have continued to melt almost all over the world. Arctic sea ice has shrunk and spring snow cover has continued to decrease, and it is "very likely" that this will continue.

— It's "virtually certain" that the upper ocean has warmed from 1971 to 2010. The ocean will continue to warm this century, with heat penetrating from the surface to the deep ocean. □

Report: Hollywood is less gay-friendly off-screen

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A new study suggests the proliferation of gay and transgender characters in films and television shows has not prevented gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender actors from experiencing discrimination in Hollywood.

The Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists commissioned the survey, released Friday. It found that more than half of the actors who identify as gay, bisexual and transgender think directors and producers are biased against them.

More than one-third of the actors who don't fall into those categories agreed with that perception.

Only 16 percent of the gay, bisexual and transgender respondents, however, said they had experienced discrimination. Gay men reported the most, with about one-fifth saying they

had been discriminated against.

The online survey of nearly 5,700 SAG/AFTRA members also found that more than half of the gay, transgender and bisexual respondents had heard producers and directors make anti-gay comments while working on-set.

The performers' union, which is holding its annual convention in Los Angeles, said it pursued the first-of-its-kind research at the request of a committee that represents lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members and as a methodical way to explore an issue usually discussed on the basis of anecdotal evidence.

The study was conducted by the Williams Institute, a think tank based at UCLA that specializes in sexual orientation, gender identity and public policy.

"The survey results show



Marta Cunningham, left, director of the documentary film "Valentine Road," and actor Wilson Cruz, national spokesperson for GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) pose together at the premiere of the film at the Museum of Tolerance on Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2013 in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

both progress and indications that more work will be necessary to make the workplace an equal and fully welcoming place for LGBT performers," M. V. Lee Badgett, a University

of Massachusetts, Amherst economics professor affiliated with the UCLA institute. "The good news is that almost no one thought that opportunities for LGBT actors were getting worse."

Of the survey's 5,692 participants, 465 identified as gay men, 61 as lesbians, and seven as transgender. Another 301 men and women described themselves as bisexual. □

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'Captain Phillips' premieres at New York Film Festival



This film image released by Sony - Columbia Pictures shows Tom Hanks, center, in "Captain Phillips."

JAKE COYLE
AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tom Hanks has had enough of playing real people. In Paul Greengrass' docu-drama "Captain Phillips," which premiered Friday as the opening night film of the New York Film Festival, he plays Richard Phillips, the captain of a cargo ship famously taken by Somali pirates in 2009. Earlier this year, Hanks made his Broadway debut playing New York journalist Mike McAlary in Nora Ephron's "Lucky Guy." And later this year, he stars as Walt Disney in "Saving Mr.

Banks," about the making of "Mary Poppins." "I got to get out of this racket," Hanks said sheepishly ahead of the Friday night premiere. "It's killing me." "Captain Phillips," which is expected to be a major contender in Hollywood's awards season, debuted at the NYFF to enthusiastic reviews and particular acclaim for Hanks' performance. But playing real-life people comes with various pressures of authenticity. Verisimilitude is a primary aim for Greengrass, who made the true-life tales "United 93" and "Bloody Sunday" with

similar documentary-like realism. Hanks met several times with Phillips at his Vermont home to help prepare for the role. "You don't want to be an idiot," said Hanks. "You don't want to ask, 'What were you feeling? What was it like? What were you feeling? Are you a hero?' — you know, ask questions like most journalists do when the time comes." The crowd, composed largely of members of the media, roared. "Captain Phillips" opens in theaters Oct. 11. The 51st New York Film Festival,



In this March 20, 2013 file photo, "Mad Men" star Jon Hamm poses at the season six premiere of the drama series at the Directors Guild of America, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Jon Hamm on vocal cords: 'I'm fine'

NICOLE EVATT

Associated Press
WEST HOLLYWOOD, California (AP) — "Mad Men" star Jon Hamm says he's "fine" despite an upcoming procedure to remove a polyp on his vocal cord. In an interview Thursday, a raspy sounding Hamm said the "simple injury" was from overuse of his voice. "Because I talk a lot," he added. Besides the polyp, the 42-year-old actor insisted that he's "healthy as a

horse." Hamm's publicist Erica Gray said he will undergo a routine outpatient procedure. Up next Hamm stars opposite Daniel Radcliffe in the miniseries, "A Young Doctor's Notebook," premiering Oct. 2 on Ovation. It is based on a collection of short stories by Russian playwright Mikhail Bulgakov. Hamm described the series, which originally aired in the U.K., as "darkly comic," "gory" and "fun." □

Kimmel and Kanye West are at war _ or are they?

LYNN ELBER
AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Jimmy Kimmel and Kanye West either are engaged in a bitter feud or a wild parody of one. A skit poking fun at West on ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live" on Tuesday provoked an irate call from the rapper about an hour and half before Thursday's show, Kimmel said in his monologue. "He is very angry because of a bit we aired this week," Kimmel said, in which a child re-enacted an interview West gave to Britain's BBC. It was "pretty innocuous," the late-night host said. But West ordered him to make a public apology and said Kimmel's life

would be "much better" if he did so, Kimmel said, adding that West also called himself the most powerful voice in media. Then came more than a half-dozen tweets posted on West's official Twitter site. One called Kimmel out of line for spoofing what West called "the first piece of honest media in years," and another referred to photographers trying to get shots of West's baby daughter with Kim Kardashian. "Jimmy Kimmel, I don't take it as a joke. ... You don't have scum bags hopping over fences trying to take pictures of your daughter," West tweeted. Other tweets used profan-



This combo of photos shows Jimmy Kimmel seen in a Jan. 25, 2013 file photo left and Kanye West seen in a May 23, 2012 file photo. Kimmel and West either are engaged in a bitter feud or a heck of a parody. Kimmel's monologue Thursday night Sept. 26, 2013 was devoted to discussing what he called a "very angry phone call" he received from West about an hour and a half before taping ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live."

Associated Press

ity and coarse language, while one mocked Kim-

mel by saying his former girlfriend Sarah Silverman is

funnier than him. "Finally, I'm in a rap feud. I always wanted to be in a rap feud," a smiling Kimmel said. Representatives for Kimmel in Los Angeles and West in New York did not immediately respond to requests for comment made early Friday, outside of business hours. In a tweet Kimmel posted before the show, he said West's attack was "not a prank, I promise," unless West was playing one on him. Kimmel has done his share of high-concept comedy, including a show in which Matt Damon tied him up onstage and took over as host. West is known for his outbursts, not his humor. □

The Way We Were



THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
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Countries that don't plan for the future tend not to do well there. When you watch the reckless behavior of the Tea Party-driven Republicans in Congress today, you can't help but fear that we'll be one of those. What makes it all the more frustrating is that in so many ways we have the wind at our back, if only we'd pull together to take advantage of it. In a world that rewards imagination, we have an incredible melting pot of immigrants that constantly blends together new ideas from technology to commerce to the arts. In a world where secure, clean energy is a huge asset, our investments in efficiency and discoveries of natural gas, if properly exploited, have the potential to pull manufacturing back to America from all corners of the globe. In a world where the big divide is no longer between developed and developing countries but rather between high-imagination-enabling countries and low-imagination-enabling countries, we remain the highest-imagination-enabling country in the world - and we have the innovative companies, startups and venture capitalists to prove it. In a world where so many countries are struggling with diversity, we do so as well, but at least we've reached a point where we could twice elect a black man for president, whose middle name is Hussein, who defeated a woman in his own party and then four years later a Mormon from the other. No one else does that.

A country with this many natural assets should be celebrating, and instead we're inflicting wounds on ourselves. The gerrymandered hyperpartisanship that has infected both parties since the end of the Cold War is debilitating enough, but the latest iteration is a new low. The Republican Party is being taken over by a Tea Party faction that is not interested in governing on any of the big issues - immigration, gun control, health care, debt and taxes - where, with just minimal compromises between the two parties, we'd amplify our strengths so much that we'd separate ourselves from the rest of the world. Instead, this group is threatening to shut down the government and undermine America's vital credit rating if it doesn't get its way.

This kind of madness helped to produce the idiotic sequester - the \$1.2 trillion in automatic, arbitrary and across-the-board budget cuts from 2013 to 2021 - that is already undermining one of our strongest assets.

Ask Dr. Francis Collins, the direc-

tor of the National Institutes of Health, the crown jewel of American biotech innovation. In fiscal 2013, the sequester required the NIH to cut \$1.55 billion across the board: 5 percent at each of its 27 institutes and centers, irrespective of whether one was on the cusp of a medical breakthrough and another was not. "There was still an ability within each institute to make adjustments, but, as NIH director, I could not decide to emphasize cancer research and down-modulate something else," Collins explained.

Because of the sequester and the fact that the NIH budget has been losing ground to inflation for 10 years, "we will not be able to fund 640 research grants that were scored in the top 17 percent of the proposals we received," said Collins. "They would have been funded without the sequester, but now they won't. They include new ideas on cancer, diabetes, autism and heart disease - all the things that we as a country say are a high priority. I can't say which of those grants would have led to the next breakthrough, or which investigator would be a Nobel Prize winner 20 years from now." Of those 640 top research proposals, 150 were from scientists financed in a previous budget cycle who had returned to the NIH to secure another three to five years of funding - because they thought they were really onto something and a peer review board agreed. "Now we are cutting them off," said Collins, "so you damage the previous investment as well as the future one." In 2014, the NIH was planning to offer new money to stimulate research proposals in a dozen areas, including how to speed up the use of stem cells to cure Parkinson's and other diseases, how to better manage pain in sickle-cell disease and how to improve early diagnosis of autism. All were shelved because of the sequester, said Collins: "Why ask people to submit applications we would just have to turn down?"

In addition, in 2013, the NIH had to turn away from its research hospital 750 patients who wanted to be part of clinical trials for disorders for which medicine currently has no answers. America's biomedical ecosystem depends heavily on the NIH doing basic research the private sector won't do. So we're cutting the medical research that has the potential to prevent and cure the very diseases that are driving health care costs upward.

In short, we're cutting without a plan - the worst thing a country or company can do - and we're doing it because one of our two parties has been taken over by angry radicals and barking fools and the old leadership is running scared.

I have plenty of issues with Democrats. They are not blameless for our paralysis. But when the Republican Party goes this far off the rails, it isn't even remotely challenging President Obama to challenge his base on taxes and entitlements.

And thus does a great country, with so much potential, slowly become ungreat. □



A Suffocating Echo Chamber



NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF
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When Sen. Ted Cruz of La Mancha jumped on his trusty steed and charged the windmills, he explained: "Everyone in America knows Obamacare is destroying the economy." He added that accepting the Affordable Care Act would be like appeasing the Nazis.

Cruz is a smart man, and maybe this is just disingenuous demagoguery. But there's a scarier possibility: After spending too much time in the Republican echo chamber, he may believe what he says.

In the 1990s, as conservative talk radio spread across America, liberals felt victimized. But, in retrospect, the rise of talk radio, Fox News Channel and right-wing websites may have done greatest harm to conservatives themselves.

The right-wing echo chamber breeds extremism, intimidates Republican moderates and misleads people into thinking that their worldview is broadly shared. That's the information bubble that tugs the entire Republican Party to the right and that transforms people like Cruz into crusading Don Quixotes. And that's why Republicans may lead us over a financial cliff, even though polling suggests that voters would blame them.

In one extreme case, the right-wing media bubble may even have been lethal for its inhabitants. That was the 2009-10 swine flu epidemic, which eventually

killed up to 18,000 Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

When the flu first emerged, Republicans and Democrats responded with the same level of concern. That makes sense. Why should political differences affect our judgments about health?

But then conservative commentators began to denounce the Obama administration's call for people to get vaccinated. Glenn Beck said he would do "the exact opposite" of what the federal government recommended. Rush Limbaugh said: If "you have some idiot government official demanding, telling me I must take this vaccine, I'll never take it."

Some on the left also voiced suspicion of the vaccine, but it was more common on right-wing shows to hear that flu vaccinations were a nefarious Obama plot.

The upshot was that Democrats were 50 percent more likely to say that they would get the life-saving vaccinations, according to a study published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law. Matthew A. Baum, the Harvard scholar who wrote the journal article, told me that he couldn't calculate how many of the total flu deaths were attributable to conservatives putting too much faith in their pundits.

Something similar may have happened when conservatives like Michele Bachmann denounced the HPV vaccine, which protects against cervical cancer (Bachmann suggested that the vaccine could be "very dangerous"). Only 35 percent of girls have received the full course of HPV vaccinations, with particularly low rates in more conservative states like Arkansas, Mississippi, Utah and Kansas. That can't be good for women in those states. Of course, the left has long had its own version of this problem as well. After Richard Nixon's 1972 landslide re-election, Pauline Kael of The New Yorker famously said she was mystified because she knew only one person who

had voted for Nixon. MSNBC and The Huffington Post have become cocoons for liberals, just as Fox News is for conservatives.

Both Fox News and MSNBC rely more on punditry than on reporting from the field, and I remember once early in the Iraq war when I was with U.S. troops watching on Fox News Channel as blowhards in the studio claimed that Iraqis were welcoming us with flowers. We watched, stunned, wondering what war the network was covering.

Research suggests that the echo chamber effect is disproportionately a problem on the right, leading inhabitants to perceive a warped reality. Many Republicans were shocked that Mitt Romney was defeated last fall because they had been assured that he would win. And a Pew survey last year found that the proportion of conservative Republicans who believe that President Barack Obama is a Muslim has doubled since 2008 to 34 percent.

Then there was the time that Beck aired the theory that Obama is the Antichrist (he later said he had been joking).

The right-wing bubble makes it harder to elect Republican presidents by enforcing an ideological purity in primaries that weakens candidates in general elections. Too much time in the bubble also leaves some Republican politicians saying things that just sound nutty to independents. For example, some Republican members of the House are taking seriously the conspiracy notion that the government is buying up bullets so that private gunowners won't be able to defend themselves.

Yet when Don Cruz of La Mancha and other extremists threaten a cataclysm that could damage the national economy, we have self-inflicted not just harm, but also a threat to the national well-being.

I often cover dysfunctional, strife-ridden countries, from Congo to Syria, Sudan to Afghanistan. This fall, alas, it looks as if I won't have to travel so far. □

From 3D Sabbath to real 'Purge,' new ways to scare

DERRIK J. LANG

AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Ozzy Osbourne can't help himself.

While on a behind-the-scenes trek through a Universal Studios Hollywood attraction based on the recently released Black Sabbath album "13," Osbourne spots a bloody mannequin corpse reclining on a phony altar. Without hesitating, the gruesomely theatrical Sabbath frontman leans down and acts like he's devouring the

credible because we've been doing it for 45 years," said Osbourne while standing inside the attraction. "It's been a remarkable year because we had our first No. 1 album in America — believe it or not — and now this. I've never seen anything like it. I keep thinking I'm going to wake up." "Well, don't wake up in here," joked Sabbath bassist and lyricist Geezer Butler next to him.

For the first time since Halloween Horror Nights returned to the Universal

Horror Nights traded warrens based on long-running slash-'em-up franchises like "A Nightmare on Elm Street" for attractions inspired by more contemporary properties, such as the "Hostel" movies, "Silent Hill" video games and "The Walking Dead" television series.

The biggest challenges for Murdy and his team for this year's six Universal mazes included figuring out how to depict the freaked-out kid from "Insidious" constantly shivering in his bed

"Hostel" filmmaker Eli Roth opened his year-round maze Goretorium in Las Vegas last year, and Neil Patrick Harris serves as one of the producers of Delusion, an annual theatrical Halloween experience taking place this year in an old Los Angeles church.

Several spooks at this year's Halloween Horror Nights are hyping new releases from the entertainment industry. Besides Sabbath's "13," there's a "scare zone" populated by actors dressed as the

well suited to a live event." In addition to the attractions based on both "Insidious" chapters and "The Purge" at Universal Studios, Blum and his Blumhouse production company are hosting their own Halloween event that expands on the kill-or-be-killed mythology of "The Purge" in a shuttered theater in downtown LA.

While the event will include a traditional maze in the theater's basement, "The Purge: Fear the Night" will also invite guests to freely roam around upstairs and interact with more than 40 actors portraying members of the Founding Fathers group depicted in the film. Some guests who give up their cellphone numbers may also be contacted with clues throughout the evening.

At Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park, Calif., the 10 mazes that comprise the 41-year-old Knott's Scary Farm haunt are based on original storylines, not established franchises. Without such brand equity, the organizers are hoping some new tricks — such as suspending "scare-actors" from the ceiling of a magical maze — will attract victims.

For the second year, Knott's will also feature a special attraction called "Trapped," which requires advanced reservations and costs an extra \$60 on top of a regular ticket.

Unlike the conga-line labyrinth structure of most haunts, "Trapped" strands no more than six visitors inside fear-inducing environments where they must overcome phobias or solve puzzles, such as eating bugs or escaping a giant rat cage, to progress through the attraction.

"It's an opportunity to do what we've never been able to do in our other mazes," said Lara Hanneman, director of technical entertainment for the theme park. "We're able to have many more interactions with our guests that go beyond just jumping out and scaring them." □



Guests experience the "Insidious: Into the Further" maze based on the recent blockbuster film "Insidious: Chapter 2" during Halloween Horror Nights in Universal City, Calif. Several spooks at this year's Halloween Horror Nights are hyping new releases from the entertainment industry. Besides "13" from Sabbath, there's a "scare zone" populated by actors dressed as the nasty Chucky doll from the direct-to-DVD sequel "Curse of Chucky," and a new maze incorporating supernatural elements from the "Insidious" films. (AP Photo/Universal Studios Hollywood)

blood from the decapitated body with his tongue. Faced with increasingly hardcore rivals and savvy visitors, organizers of such Halloween attractions this year have conjured up several new theatrical and technological innovations in hopes of licking the competition, as well as promoting entertainment fare like horror films and records. For Sabbath, it marks the first time their tunes have been turned into a maze. "It adds another dimension to what we do, which is in-

Studios backlot in 2007, creative director John Murdy has incorporated video effects into a maze. In a room inspired by the song "Electric Funeral" within Sabbath's colorful 3D realm, monitors made to look like windows broadcast explosive 3D visuals in tandem with a wind machine.

"I just thought it would be cool to have a nuclear bomb go off and our guests be in the middle of that," said Murdy.

In recent years, Hallow-

while toy rocking horses galloped by themselves. Also troublesome was how hordes of guests could be vomited on all night long by an "Evil Dead" demon. "They're all like little science projects," said Murdy. "No matter how successful we were the previous year, our philosophy is to always treat it like it's the first year we're back in business."

Beyond the rotating attractions at Halloween Horror Nights, a few celebrities have invested in their own haunted attractions.

nasty Chucky doll from the direct-to-DVD sequel "Curse of Chucky," and a new maze incorporating supernatural elements from the "Insidious" films.

"I think it strengthens the brand," said Jason Blum, producer of "The Purge," "Insidious" and "Paranormal Activity" horror flicks. "Because it's done so well, it also gives us a little more street cred. In the case of 'The Purge,' there's so much mythology that wasn't necessarily included in the first film, it makes it